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OUR BRILLIANT FAILURE

A Sketch in Ultramarine.



READER, my name is Coodler. Having unbosomed myself to this extent, I need have no compunction in adding that I have a wife, a family of two interesting children, a snug business, and have been recommended to try Banting. By this you must not imagine that I am fat: I am only comfortable; my angles are pleasantly rounded, and I haven't a wrinkle on my chubby countenance. I am of a good temper—my wife once termed it seraphic, but since my recent visit to the seaside I am afraid she has not been able to apply

that extravagant term with the same consciousness of its correct significance as before we—but there, I mustn't anticipate.

Immersed in business from ten till five, it is not to be wondered at that I look forward to my annual holiday with, if I may be allowed the expression, my mental mouth watering. I am quite aware that there is no such thing as a mental mouth, though why there should not be when we have Shakespeare's authority for the existence of a 'mind's eye,' I can't say. But I never had a very great opinion of poets. I

have had one or two on my books before now, and they are not punctual in their payments; far from it. Well, as I was saying, when the weather begins to grow warm I find my place of business insupportable. I soon begin to grow warm myself, and a very small amount of sunshine and exertion overcomes me. My wife is something of the same temperament, and she also longs annually for the seaside; for we don't consider a mere visit to the country an 'out.' We like fields, and hedges, and cows, and all that sort of thing; but we can have all that if we drive to Richmond or Epping Forest. What we want is a sniff of the briny, the bracing salt air, the clammy, sticky atmosphere, that makes you feel uncomfortable and happy. I am vulgar in my tastes and delight in Margate. Some people say they like to go to the seaside for quiet. Very good; let 'em go. I prefer noise. I hate quiet. I like niggers. I like Punch. I like the Jetty; and as for your Explanades and dulness at your fashionable places, they're not in my way, and that's the honest truth. Now in her heart my wife delights in Margate too. Why, we went there when we were courting, and so the place has a sort of charm for both of us.

But when I suggested 'Margate this year you should have seen the expression on my wife's face. It was grand. I knew what it meant. We've lately grown acquainted with Mrs. Mackintosh of — Square, and a very genteel lady she is, and mighty grand notions she's imbued my wife with—horror of Margate being one of them.

'Mrs. Mackintosh tells me that Margate is unbearable this season; such a set of people!' said Mrs. Coodler to me when I mentioned my favourite haunt.

'Bother the people,' I replied; 'I suppose you want Brighton with the sun in your eyes all day, and everybody dressed as if they were going into the Parks.'

'Oh, dear no!' said my wife, with a toss of the head; 'it's not the season at Brighton yet.'

Pretty changes had taken place

in my wife's notions since Mrs. Mackintosh made her acquaintance. She never used to lay such a stress on its being the season; in fact, she was rather partial to the earlier portion of the summer or the autumn, lodgings being cheaper at those times. Well, from Brighton I went through all the seaside places I could think of; but Mrs. Coodler had an objection to them all. I began at last to have serious fears that we should miss our seaside out altogether, for Mrs. Mackintosh had something to say against every place. My wife determined to go nowhere 'out of the season,' so really our choice was limited, as those places whose seasons fell late in the year were out of the question. I must take my six weeks in the summer, you see, and so the Isle of Thanet being shut against us (for Ramsgate shared the Mackintosh denunciation, and Broadstairs I kicked at myself), I began to feel uncomfortable. I at one time imagined Mrs. Coodler was about to propose Boulogne in order to come back with a foreign flavour; but she can't even go to Kew by the boat without being ill for the day; and as to my opinion of Frenchmen—well, there, if you want to get my back up mention 'em, that's all.

As luck would have it, Mrs. Mackintosh's mother fell very ill about this time, and the genteel friend had to go abroad, which was a great relief to me, for of all the women I ever knew she—but there, I say nothing, she's in a foreign land, poor thing, and I can only pity her.

She had gone, it is true, but the genteel viper we had been nourishing in the family bosom had left its sting.

She had recommended Mudville. At present you are, of course, by no means impressed by the enormity of recommending Mudville. You don't know Mudville, never heard of Mudville, and will probably not find Mudville in the map. But wait. Hear more, and I was going to add, avoid Mudville, but that advice would be superfluous for a description of my visit to and my treatment at that den of —

but there, again, you'll excuse me, I'm sure, when you have read a few pages further.

We were sitting at tea—a social meal in which I delight—nobody ever quarrels over tea; it's far beyond dinner in my opinion. We were seated at tea, Mrs. Coodler, myself, and Grimley, an old friend. Grimley has a disagreeable knack of making himself universally unpleasant. Were it not for this he would be a very nice fellow. He is what they call a rough diamond, and takes a pleasure in being rude; but, as I say, it's his only drawback. 'Pass the buttered toast, Grimley,' I said with a smile, for I was in a good temper, and was eating more than was prudent.

'Sooner keep you for a day than a week,' replied the rough diamond, with his mouth full of muffin.

My wife threw a glance at Grimley that would have annihilated many men, but he didn't notice it.

'You go in for tea as if you were at the seaside,' remarked Grimley, after a pause.

Disagreeable as was the remark, I was grateful to my friend for making it, for I had been longing to touch upon the subject of our summer tour and hadn't known how to approach it. My wife brightened up too, and left off looking black, a thing she always does when Grimley comes. I can't say why, but women are queer creatures, and Mrs. Coodler is no exception to the rule.

'Wish I was at the seaside,' I exclaimed, throwing a side glance at my wife.

'Ah! indeed,' sighed Mrs. C.

'Why don't you go, then?' grunted our agreeable friend.

'That's just it,' I replied, hurriedly; 'why don't we, eh, Jane?'

Jane didn't know she was sure. For her part she was ready to go to-morrow.

'Margate again, I suppose,' sneered Grimley: he had a dreadful habit of sneering—all rough diamonds have.

'Margate indeed!' said my wife, with a toss of her head. 'Oh dear, no! no more of your Margates; then, after a pause, she added with

most irritating emphasis, 'nor your Rams gates.'

Now this was quite uncalled-for, as we had never stayed at Rams gate, nor had I suggested that we should.

Grimley had always abused Margate. Now, however, he espoused the cause of that charming place and praised it beyond measure.

'Got too grand for Margate, I suppose, Coodler,' he observed, taking another cup of tea—his third.

'No, I haven't,' I replied, indignantly. 'Give me Margate before all the watering-places in England, ay or Wales either if you come to that,' and I brushed the crumbs off my shirt front with an indignant sweep of my hand, for I was (though seraphic) beginning to get a little put out.

'Margate's low,' jerked out my wife, with a scowl at Grimley.

'Too many tradespeople, I suppose,' sneered the rough diamond, with a maddening grin.

'Well, I won't go,' said my wife, bringing down her fist (positively her fist) upon the table, and making the cups and saucers rattle again.

'Go abroad, ma'am,' put in Grimley; 'there's lots of pretty places in Switzerland.'

The puppy! because he had once been down the Rhine with Mr. Cook's party.

'Or America,' he continued with that horrid smile of his; 'there's all sorts of goings on there now, notwithstanding the war. Saratoga, for instance.'

'And whose *she*, I should like to know?' asked my wife, whose geography is limited, and, poor thing, she thought it was a female's name.

'Oh, rubbish!' I exclaimed, wishing to cover her ignorance, 'none of your chaff, Grimley, for it's not required. I shall stay at home unless it's settled very soon.'

This frightened Mrs. Coodler, I can tell you. She turned pale. I saw the change distinctly—she turned *very* pale, and gasped out rather than spoke the following:

'Mrs. Mackintosh has told me of a delightful place on the—coast; a lovely spot which is hardly known yet; a wonderful place for children, and very, *very* genteel.'

Reader, a word in your ear. Whenever you hear of a spot being described as a 'wonderful place for children,' avoid it. Remember you are not a child, and go somewhere else.

'And what's the name of it, my dear?' I asked.

'Mudville,' replied my wife, with a side look at Grimley, for she suspected he would make one of his vulgar satirical remarks upon it.

'Well,' he said (as I knew he would), 'it sounds very pretty; quite inviting, I may say,' and he chuckled. He had a peculiar chuckle, something like the laugh of the hyena, only more horrible.

I felt bound to rush to the rescue.

'I have no doubt that if Mrs. Mackintosh says it's nice, it is nice,' I observed.

My wife gave me a grateful squeeze of the hand under the table, which brought the tears into my eyes; for she is a muscular woman, though short of stature.

'Has she ever been there, Mum?' asked Grimley.

'No, she hasn't,' replied Mrs. C., snappishly; 'but she's friends who have, and I can trust her.'

'Ah! can Coodler? that's the thing,' said Grimley, with a twinkle in his evil eye. This was a sly dig at my business, a subject upon which I allow no man to joke. I drew myself up. I am not tall, but even my enemies admit that I am dignified. I drew myself up, and placing my thumbs in my waistcoat holes, and my head back—my favourite position when desirous of being impressive—I thus addressed the satirical Grimley.

'Grimley, you are an old friend. As the poet says, 'We were boys together;' but I will not allow you, Grimley, to throw my shop in my teeth in the presence of the gentler sex. Don't do it again, Grimley, because I don't like it.' Then turning to my wife, I said, with a sudden transition of manner from the imperially severe to the domestically gentle, 'My love, we go to Mudville on Monday.'

Going to Mudville, and getting there, are, I beg to state, two very

different matters. The spirit may be willing, but the railway arrangements are worse than weak, the train putting you down at a very considerable distance from your destination.

We started—self and wife, my son Christopher, aged nine, my nurse, Sarah Naggles (estimable, but warm-tempered), and my infant, Roderick—from the station after breakfast, and the train put us down at Muffborough, and left us looking disconsolately at our boxes on the platform, and wondering whether we should get a fly, for we were some miles from Mudville, and we'd a good deal of luggage—we always have. We didn't wonder long. The Interesting Stranger soon ferreted out a fly, and a pretty specimen of a fly it was.

But first, touching the Interesting Stranger. He was a remarkably good-looking person, that is for those who admire tall people—I don't; little and good's my motto. He had a slight tendency of blood to the nose, but, as my wife remarked, that might have been constitutional; he had very large, and certainly very bushy whiskers, though they were not things I ever admired much, looking a good deal like blackening brushes, I think; and though I've not the slightest symptom of 'em myself, I don't envy those who have 'em, not I. He parted his hair down the middle (an idiotic fashion, only fit for women; but that's neither here nor there), and he wore his seaside hat in a jaunty manner, and was altogether rollicking, and perhaps a trifle vagabondish-looking. However, I never judge a man by his appearance, and I must admit he was very polite. He talked politics to me, for he got into the same carriage with us as we were starting, hoping he didn't inconvenience us, and not aying the least bit at the baby; he handed my wife the paper; he snapped his fingers at Roderick; and he threw Christopher into convulsions by showing him some tricks with halfpence, and imitating the man who came round for the tickets. We were quite delighted to hear he was going to Mudville;

we were sure of one pleasant acquaintance there, at all events. I never saw my wife so pleased with anybody in my life, for she generally puts on a haughty way with strangers, which I have heard before to-day described as 'queenly'; for she is chary of making acquaintances, and never forgets her family, who, between ourselves, were against her marrying me, especially her Uncle Benjamin, who was a something or other under Government in foreign parts, and came home with a pension, and no liver to speak of. Aristocratic in a small way was Mrs. C. before she condescended to smile on Christopher Coodler, I can tell you; and she had refused a half-pay officer, a young man high up in the Customs, and a distiller with a beautiful house at Brixton, previous to my popping the question. So considering all things, I was surprised to see how affable she was with the Interesting Stranger bound for Mudville. When the Interesting Stranger—who, to save trouble, I will, if you don't mind, denominate I. S.—found us ruefully eyeing our luggage at the station, he smilingly came to our assistance, and pounced upon a fly like—like a spider. Then he helped to pile our luggage on to the roof, and bullied and cajoled the stupid driver into an almost wakeful condition, and so at last we found ourselves on the road to Mudville, and later on at that retired spot.

Mudville was one of those places that beggar description. It was small and melancholy, a wretched little—but there, I won't attempt it. We had been recommended to the apartments of Mrs. Grogrum, and thither we drove.

Mrs. Grogrum's front apartments looked out on to the sea, and by an ingenious arrangement the builder had contrived that the back windows also gave you a fine view of the ocean. Mrs. Grogrum's house was built diagonally (I think that's the word), and it seemed to me to catch every wind that blew. It was plentifully supplied with windows too, and they rattled delightfully without ceasing.

Mrs. Grogrum was a fiery-faced female, with the most obtrusive black 'front' I ever saw. I believe that front to have been made of horsehair, it was so shiny, stiff, and undeceptive. From a casual glance at the rubicund features of Mrs. G., I came to a hasty conclusion that she was addicted to ardent liquors. I was not surprised at this, as it is not altogether uncommon with brandy and watering-place landladies. Pardon my humble joke, it shall be my last. The instant we were settled (though we were a long time coming to terms with the one-eyed fly driver, who was pertinacious, insolent, and apparently in a chronic state of inebriety), my wife went out to see what we could have to eat; for she is a good manager, is Mrs. Coodler, and I don't know a better judge of butchers' meat or fish. So she started off with the view to seeing the tradespeople, whilst I remained to settle myself. Settle myself, indeed! I hadn't got through the first half of my police reports (a part of the paper for which I have a weakness, I admit,) when a loud tap was heard at my door, and before I had time to say come in, the form of Mrs. Grogrum blocked up the entrance, and stood quivering with some strong emotion. I have before observed that I am beneath the middle height—a good deal beneath it—I am also a peaceable man, prone to let things take their own way, and with a sublime respect for 'peace and quiet.' Consequently, I will admit that the quivering frame of Mrs. Grogrum flustered me, and I felt a sudden palpitation, and a general trembling, which was not lost upon the landlady, whose quivering increased, and whose features became, if possible, more fiery, as she saw me quail beneath her luminous eye.

'Oh sir,' she blurted forth, making a sharp bob, 'asking your parding, but is Mrs. Coodler to cook your meals, or am I to do 'em? I merely wish to know to save confusion for the futur.'

I stared. It was the only thing I could do at the moment, and I did it.

'I repeat, sir, which is to do 'em?'

'Why, Mrs. Groggins—'

'Groggins, sir, if *you* please,' was the lofty reply; for I'd called the woman by a wrong name in the agitation of the moment.

'Rum, by all means,' I responded with a touch of humour.

She looked daggers at me, but luckily, like the gentleman in the play, 'used none.'

'For Mrs. Coodler, she come into my kitching and made remarks. Now I'm missis in my own 'ouse, I do 'ope, and I am *not* a going to have strange ladies a coming and a poking their noses, and a prying into *my* kitching, and a making remarks about my domestic. Mrs. Coodler comes into *my* kitching, she does, and requestes to look at my frying-pan, and speaks sharp to my domestic as doesn't bring the frying-pan instantaneous; me being missis in my own 'ouse and not lodgers, nor never will as long as my name's Maria Groggins. No. Impudent curiosity is what I won't stand, because it flusters me; and one as wishes to do her dooty to parties as takes her apartments, can't be flustered and do her dooty at the same time. So what I says, sir, is, if your good lady is a going to cook, let's know at once, and the sooner we parts the best for all concerned; but if I'm to do the cooking, why then let Mrs. Coodler keep herself to herself, a making her complaints when proper, of course, but not a coming a prying about in parties' kitchings and a asking to see frying-pans.'

I believe that if a violent fit of coughing had not taken Mrs. Groggins, she would have been speaking still. However, she coughed and curtsied and quivered herself gradually out of the room; and mentally determining to look for fresh lodgings as soon as possible, I again attacked the great embezzlement case at Bow Street. But I was not to get beyond the third paragraph uninterrupted. Again the door opened, and again a form quivered with passion upon the mat.

This time it was not Mrs. Groggins, but her servant of all-work,

Susan, or as she called herself, 'Shoozan.'

Shoozan had a round rosy face, and round rosy elbows; she had red hair, and was freckled in reckless profusion. She could not, even by her most ardent admirers, have been considered a 'neat-handed Phillis.' The number of grates she black-leaded weekly was evidently overwhelming, when compared to the ablutionary exercises she indulged in. In short, she was 'grimy' to the last degree; and she wore black stockings, and a black cap, both of which articles I would abolish by act of parliament, if I could. Shoozan was bursting with some strong grievance, so I laid down my newspaper and waited to hear her story.

'Please, sir,' she gushed out after an inward struggle, 'would you like to be called a "nuzzy"?"'

Now I don't think I *should* like to be called a nuzzy. I have no notion what it means, but it sounds insolent. Before I could reply, however, the girl burst forth again, 'And if she expects as I'm going to take the children's dinner up to the top of the 'ouse, she's mistook.'

Here Shoozan wagged her head about defiantly.

'My good girl,' I said, for I always feel for servants in lodging-houses, poor wretches! but the kindly tone of my voice was too much for her; she burst into a vehement boo-hoo, and wept loudly. Beauty in tears is all rubbish. Those poets again! Beauty blubbery looks frightful, with a red nose and swollen eyes. Even the plain domestic looked plainer after wiping her eyes with her apron.

'It's very hard to be called names, a poor girl as never see her parents.' Here she burst out again.

'There, go along,' I said; 'Sarah shall see to the children's dinner;' and with a parting howl Shoozan retired.

What a time my wife seemed away! Again I attacked the embezzlement case, and this time I got as far as the magistrate's request if the prisoner had anything to say. But no further.

The door again burst open, and Sarah Naggles stood before me. Sarah Naggles, than whom there is not a better nurse and a more abominable temper in Britain, stood there, shaking a thousand times more than Grogum. In a tremulous point of view the landlady was a mere blancmange compared to Sarah, who was a downright 'shivering mountain.' For some seconds she could not speak: at length she did—loudly.

'Mr. Coodler, sir, I wish to leave your service at once, sir, on the spot.' Here she selected a stain on the drugget to stand upon, thereby adding, as she evidently imagined, force to her remark.

'Good gracions, Sarah!—'

'It's no use your trying to look dignified, sir. When Sarah Naggles says a thing Sarah Naggles means it; and I'm off by the next conveyance.'

I looked round helplessly; but my wife was out still, and until she came back I could say nothing. Sarah could. She was apt to stick on a good many superfluous h's when excited, and she gave it as her 'hopinion that the landlady was honly a helderly hignoramus.'

She would have continued in the same strain, but, luckily, my youngest child, with intelligence beyond its years—or, rather, months—took advantage of her absence to fall off a high chair. This necessitated the presence of Sarah upstairs, and a temporary cessation of hostilities.

I was getting tired of being bullied, and I seized my hat with the intention of going out to find Mrs. Coodler. Chancing to look out of window, I saw Mrs. Coodler. Mrs. Coodler was in conversation with the Interesting Stranger. Mrs. C. was smiling, the I. S. was smiling. Apparently Mrs. C. was enjoying herself, whilst I—but the contrast was too much, and I admit I was injudicious enough to dash my hat down over my brows. As it stuck tight, and wouldn't come up again, I immediately repented my rashness, and felt about for the door with a crab-like action which was appropriate to the locality, but ungraceful.

Suddenly I found myself in somebody's arms. With a convulsive effort I raised my hat; terror had endowed me with increased strength, and I had a dreadful suspicion it might be Mrs. Grogum.

It was not. It was the one-eyed fly-driver. The one-eyed fly-driver had been drinking, and swayed backwards and forwards, occasionally hiccuping. I asked him his business.

'Business,' replied the man, looking round, as if undecided as to how he should continue, then jumping to an indisputable conclusion, 'ain't pleasure. What is pleasure to some folks is pain to others.'

The combination of annoyances was getting too much for me. I drew myself up, and assumed a frown.

'When I clapt my eyes,' continued the driver.

'Your eye, sir,' I replied, loftily. 'Stick to facts.'

'On you,' said the one-eyed incubus, not noticing my interruption, 'I said that's a gent as 'll stand a glass of summut. But you didn't, now, did you?' and the fellow put his head on one side, and leered hideously.

'Most decidedly I did not,' I replied, proudly.

'Nor ain't going to?' he continued.

'Nor ain't going to,' I replied, clenchedly, if I may be allowed the expression.

'Werry good,' said he; 'then my mouth's sealed. I had a thing to say' (unintentionally quoting Mr. William Shakspeare, who ~~was~~ a poet, rather) 'but I won't. I'm not a-going to put my finger in no one else's pie.'

If you could have seen his finger! I did, and have not eaten pie since.

He vanished. I turned my head away shudderingly, and when I recovered myself he had gone.

I was becoming rabid. I was also awfully hungry. My wife came in. I should have received her with an air of sarcastic politeness (any friends of mine who read this will know the style of thing I mean)—my playfully severe air, you know), but I was broken-spirited by recent trials.

'It's so annoying,' she said, coming to the point at once; 'there ain't a piece of meat to be got in the place; not even a chop to be procured for love or money before to-morrow.'

'Sweet spot!' I murmured.

'And I've been to every shop in the place to get change for a five-pound note; but they say there isn't as much money in the town.'

I smiled sardonically, but didn't speak.

'Then the fishmonger only comes over from Shellborough on Mondays and Fridays, and to-day's Wednesday; and Mrs. Grogrum says her fireplace isn't big enough to roast joints, so we must have all our meat baked; and there's no draught ale that's drinkable to be got here, because there's so little demand for it; and the poulterer's only got one very small rabbit, which is not at all good; and Mrs. Grogrum said she understood we found our own plate—she's only got two-pronged steel forks; and there's a dog next door but one, they tell me, that howls all night; and the windows in our room rattle so dreadfully, that we shan't get much sleep, I'm afraid; and there's no lock to the door; and the pillows are like dummies, they're so hard. And so you must put up with an egg and a slice of bacon for your tea.'

The volubility of my wife, culminating in a decided *non sequitur*, was more than I could bear. I seized a chair in my agitation, and the back rails came off in my hand. This calmed me. I propped it against the wall with the determination of declaring I hadn't done it, and smiled once more.

'Mrs. Coodler,' I observed (I never address my wife thus except under very peculiar circumstances),—'Mrs. Coodler, I have taken these apartments for a month, and we must try and make the best of them. Fortified by the cheering society of the Interesting Stranger, no doubt you will be able to bear up.'

Mrs. Coodler coloured, and would have replied, but I waved her aside, and went out into the street to see the lions!

The lions! I was not long in

seeing them all. There were the six bathing-machines, the 'principal' hotel, the post-office, the library, and—nothing else. The library was an imposing edifice; that is to say, it was a dead take-in. There were no new books whatever, and I refused to be comforted by the 'Adventures of a Guinea'; neither could I be brought to properly appreciate the charms of 'Pamela'; so I went home again. I walked upstairs, and entering the apartment, found—no, reader, you're wrong for once—not the Interesting Stranger, but a policeman—a regular rural peeler. He eyed me with professional distrust and a calm smile. I swelled with indignation, and tried to awe him, but he was not to be awed.

'Good morning,' said the policeman, familiarly. 'I presume—'

'You do, sir,' I replied sharply, in my imperious manner; 'you presume very considerably in entering a gentleman's apartments in this way, sir. Let me tell you an Englishman's first floor is his castle, sir. What do you want?'

'You!' replied the constable, in a deep tone.

I was becoming accustomed to this sort of thing, and smiled.

'Your name is Dumpton,' said the fellow.

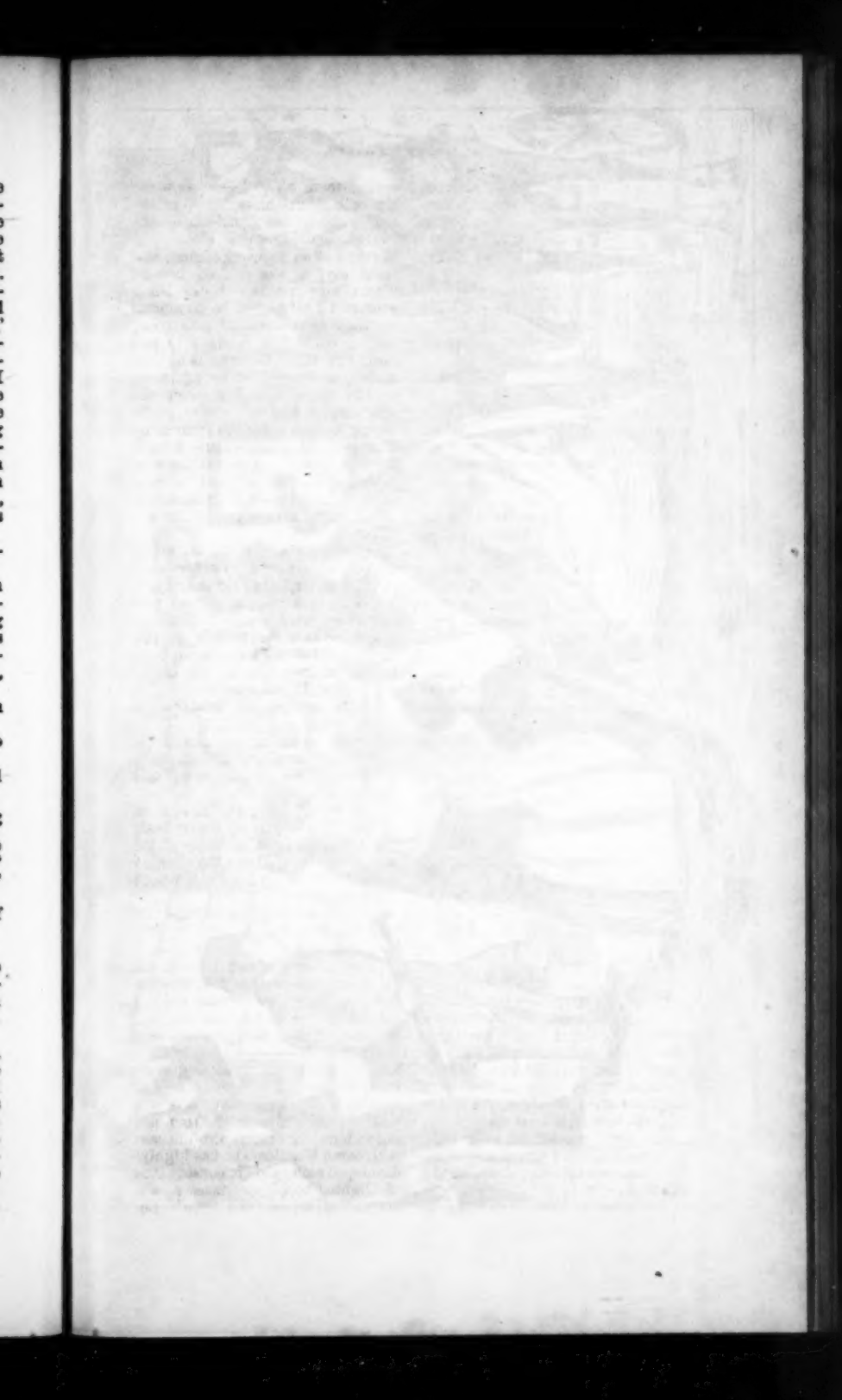
'All right,' I replied; 'have it so, if you like; you must know best.' I was tickled by the atrocity of the whole thing. 'What's the charge? Burglary? Garotting? Murder? What is it?'

'You come from town by the half arter ten train?'

'I did.'

'Good! A telegram informs me I'm to arrest a party of your description; at least you're near enough the description for me to arrest you. So, without more ado, come on.'

My wife is an excellent woman, and at times her feelings get too many for her. She heard the final speech of the policeman, and was with difficulty dissuaded from flying at him. Such was also the case with Sarah Naggles, who has highly-developed nails, and (in consequence of blighted hopes) nourishes an abnormal hatred of 'the force.' Be-





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tween these two desperate women the one policeman of Mudville would, I am afraid, have come to the most unmitigated grief. He saw his peril, and produced a pair of handcuffs. I confess the sight unmanned me, and I sank into a chair. I produced my card; I pointed to the direction on my boxes; I threatened 'to write to the 'Times;' I explained how ridiculous it would be in a felon travelling about with a family; I pleaded and stormed alternately, but to no object. The policeman had received his instructions; had been directed to us by the malevolent one-eyed fly-driver; had executed his orders, and was deaf to reason, blind to a bribe, and generally stupid and unswervingly upright.

Mrs. Grogrum coming in suddenly upon the scene did not improve the tone of the meeting, as may be supposed. She had settled that we 'was no good' the instant Mrs. C. had made rude remarks about her frying-pan, 'a article as a reel lady would despise to worrit herself about.' And as for that sylph in the black stockings, Shoozan, she had long ago learnt to place the blindest confidence in the Mudville policeman, who was the model of manly beauty in the eyes of the neighbouring maid-servants.

We were at our wits' end. My wife was frantic, the nurse furious, the children fractious. Wrapped in his panoply of authority and pig-headedness, the policeman alone was calm.

To us (at this juncture) entered blithely the Interesting Stranger. A smile was on his lip, a tear was not

in his eye. I was 'about to appeal to him to clear up the mystery when I observed a remarkable change come over his features. At the same time a change as remarkable came over the countenance of the aggressive constable. He clapped his eye on the figure of the Interesting Stranger, and almost instantly clapped his professional handcuffs on the wrists of the same individual.

The Interesting Stranger answered to the description in the telegram in every particular, and to this day I cannot comprehend the reason for arresting me, for we were not in the least alike. The I. S. was tall, I am—well, under the middle height. The I. S. was good-looking (at least Mrs. Coodler declares so, spite of everything; and he was described by the police reporter as a 'person of fashionable appearance'), and I am, I admit, not striking to look at, though dignified for a short person. The I. S. was not dressed like me either; so, altogether, it was a muddle at Mudville, and I might have kicked up a great row about it.

Did I stop to have any arguments, to receive the grovelling apologies of Mrs. Grogrum, the trembling beseechings of the obtuse policeman, the solemn assurances of attention and cleanliness from Shoozan, the universal sympathy of the excited populace—did I wait for all this?

Did I?

Did I fetch the one-eyed fly-driver from his favourite haunt, and bundle self and family back to town that afternoon?

Didn't I!

H. J. BYRON.

FLOWERS AND FOREIGN FLOWER-FASHIONS.

IT is the time of year to begin to talk of flowers; and not only of the flowers but of all bright things. After six months abroad how far from bright things look to one! It is not that foreign climates have quite all the sunshine. This winter abroad, I have seen fogs that were quite as thick, though not exactly

as yellow as most of those in London. It is that English tastes are so essentially colourless. Greys and browns and ash tints are really the English livery. Who else would colour walls dust colour, or dress themselves all in snuff colour? A Frenchwoman wears a brown dress, but then it has just

the touches of clear bright tint about it that prevent the dinginess so dear to English hearts. French walls may be grey, but then the grey is a clear one.

It feels rather a hopeless task to talk about colours now, when before one's mind's eye come the hills with the silvery olive trees, terrace above terrace, waving those leafy clouds, and when amidst them come the rosy, soft, plume-like almond trees; and when on the outer slopes these fair pink plumes are rising like rose-clouds in blue skies; and underneath that blue sky, and out across the plain, the sunny Mediterranean is spreading out broad and tranquil. That wonderful clear air which draws the scent from the flowers—that air through which the voices sound, and through which the far-off footsteps seem close to you on the hill—gives there a wonderful charm that elsewhere one misses. But yet let us think of England and its summer and autumn mornings. Who would not change the olive trees for the deep-green lawns of England; and who does not love the dewiness and the freshness of her green woods? Can any air be sweeter than that of our June mornings; and can any perfumes match with those of our heaths and woods, our violet-banks in the spring, and our clover-fields in the summer, and with the fresh aroma of frost-touched flowers in autumn? The scents abroad are delightful, but they are all too *hard*. They are too aromatic; they have not the sweetness ours have. The clearness of the air, the hardness of those sweet scents; they form the contrast to the softness of English summers with their faint haze of blue, and to the wafts of perfume that reach us from trees in the dew.

It is very rare abroad to see really pretty gardens. People have not the notion of finishing things that we have; and though a royal palace is wonderful in effect when its gardens lose themselves insensibly in the woods, yet to English eyes, and in the many gardens, there is a great want of completeness—you want to know where the thing ends; and you have a strong feeling that if

that space were defined the inside would be much tidier. You rarely see well-trimmed hedges or nicely-kept sunk fences; and walls with roses growing on them are an English institution. The turf is not English turf, and the soil is ill kept and rough; pieces of straw sticking up sometimes, and stones thought of no account. No; it is a certain fact that no gardens compare with the English. Just as our hothouse fruits excel many native productions because of their high culture and the careful selection of sorts, so our flowers and gardens may have to contend with many difficulties, and yet may grow to a wonderful height of beauty.

There are, however, few French women who care about their gardens. Their view is to have flowers, and I confess they deserve them; for never did I see more lovely use than they make of them.

One of the great things that struck me in the Parisian houses was the way in which the flowers came into the furniture. They were as much a part of it as a chair or a table-cloth. And another striking thing was the material used. I know nothing effective that would be despised for commonness. There is an *idea* in the thing. You don't see merely stray flowerpots or a rose in a glass, uncomfortably, that looks wondering how it got there, and that sets you speculating how soon it will be drawn out by the brush of some passing sleeve or the flinging down of a newspaper.

Dahlias and sunflowers, golden rod and Michaelmas daisies, all are perfectly welcome; and, what is more, quite beautiful and entirely in their place. But I must give some instances of definite arrangement. A thing that struck exceedingly was the clear idea of place there was. You did not see a flowerstand looking disconsolate somewhere; but just in the window framing the light as it were, there would be a long flower-box, just an edging of flowers inside. People in a room turn so naturally to a window, that there is no describing the bright effect that this has. The windows opening down

have simply a low box along them, and the plants at the sides, perhaps, are now and then rather higher.

I wonder if people have noticed the great objection that there appears to be to clear white in English gardens—in flower-boxes—everywhere. Think only in what boxes have you seen white conspicuous? And yet there is simply nothing that gives such colour and lightness. It sounds, perhaps, paradoxical to say that white gives colour. But take a pot of pink hyacinths and another of red tulips, and put in between them a plant of the large white primrose, and you can then decide whether colour is lost or gained. The time when white weakens colour is, when in a vase or in anything you have a perpetual breakage, a little dab of one colour and then an atom of white. There can be no real colour, nothing but muddiness there. And muddiness and grubbiness are two things that abroad are avoided. I don't speak of cleanliness. I am writing of looks.

These boxes of which I am writing are always the brightest things. In winter they have primroses, in summer they have Queen Margarets; the white single China aster, and, in fact, any clean white flower, from large corn-daisies upwards, are 'good enough' to be used, if only they are wanted.

There certainly is abroad sad want of conventionality. Asparagus leaves are beautiful; but a Belgian drawing-room would merely blush to admit them. I confess, when in Paris, to my shame, having asked what that lovely leaf was. The long foliage is cut quite low down, tied carefully into a bunch made up with moss or other stalks exactly to fit the size; and then being tightly tied the bunch is forced firmly into a hyacinth-glass full of water. The air is nearly excluded, and the branches last long and well. This method applies, moreover, to many things more, in glasses. These tufts of leaves must be light; they then have a ferny look, and ferns and grasses also are charming in these boxes. One place in which the boxes appear especially to advance,

is when there are large mirrors that come down to the floor. In great lobbies, for instance, where the furniture is not too hall-like, and where, in consequence, gilded mirrors themselves are well in place, I have seen these long boxes give an indescribable brightness and look of habitation and homelikeness to a house. The flowers in them, too, are strikingly few in number. In all French things it seems to me want of crowding is very conspicuous. A couple of pots of white primroses—a plant or two of crimson, and perhaps a little blue flower, or a plant of violets; these amongst the green leaves would be thought, and would be, quite sufficient.

In summer, the artemesia is very much used abroad. Its tall growth and starry white flowers are most effective in gardens. The Tuileries last autumn owed half their brightness to them—contrasting with the rose and blue of the German asters—alternating with dahlias, and here and there backed with roses.

It is a mistake to have too many blossoms on one plant, especially in white flowers. In the case of primroses, for instance, and of the white asters, if they are 'full of blossom,' the plant is a confused mass. It seems to me that the flowers should be kept fairly few. And all gardeners will know how much cutting off some buds and all the too full-blown flowers will always prolong the time of each plant's lasting or blossoming.

The heaths in Paris are very gay and lovely. When one leaves the hills in the south, with all their white scented bruyère, one can hardly recognize the plants of the same family. The heaths are ten times the gayest, and yet one likes best the white bruyère, with its tiny bell-blossoms and its slightly fragrant atmosphere. All the grand plants of the 'beath family have no scent at all: but I believe Parisians prefer rather scentless flowers; there is such a general feeling abroad of the unwholesomeness of those which we think so delightful. The azaleas, are, however, loveliest of all in spring. They are not tortured to

shapes, but are let grow wildly, and then they take their own form of low spreading trees, with flowers that spread themselves out upon the branches, and that are sometimes half-hidden amongst the leaves.

But I must go on to others of the flower-fashions. Another thing that struck me was the great use made of green in everything, and the immense effect thus produced. A stand of flowers would really have very few plants indeed. There would be green and moss—and perhaps two plants in flower. Setting off one gem is far more the fashion than collecting a crowd that detract from each other's beauty. Each flower is thus allowed to be distinct. And then things are on a large scale. I have passed under a flower vase often in going to dinner—a tall vase on a side-table, with really gigantic flowers—sunflowers and dahlias, with great roses and gladioli, and with such large green leaves, and the flowers cut with such long stalks, that each seemed well detached—and the strange selection was Oriental, and beautiful in its strangeness. Of course all things of this kind must suit the rooms they are in; but in immense lofty rooms, and with the large massive style of most of the French furniture, nothing can be in better taste than some of these brilliant vases. Then the beautiful feathery grasses are very much used in Paris; and nothing can be more graceful, on a large scale, than are these white plumes.

I must record, too, the trellises that are covered with growing ivy, and that stand all summer-time in front of the empty hearth. In winter, I have seen them moved merely to the window. These long boxes have a trellis attached at the back and ends. A plant or two of ivy is enough to twine over the trellis, and then, through all the season, a succession of flowers is kept up, in a way that is most effective,—and, to me, the most unsatisfactory. But, then, I never can bear to think that things have no roots when they look to be growing. A range of hyacinth-glasses, however, are in the box. The glasses are, of course, completely concealed by the

moss; and in each of these said glasses is a tightly-bound bunch of something—it may be asparagus-leaves, as I have described just now, or it may be Japan lilies, or, still oftener, gladioli. Either of these flowers is perfect for such uses. The tall white lily, also, is exquisite in this way; only, of course, for a drawing-room its perfume is far too powerful; though, when such things are used, as in Paris, to place at the side of altars, nothing can be more lovely than these tall and most pure white lilies.

The blue Michaelmas daisy comes in well for these stands too; but as it is always well to describe one definite pattern that is known to answer, I made a special note of one both good and attainable. A common green-painted box, like our mignonette boxes (of course this should be lined with zinc, or at least made without holes, the former plan being desirable for the drawing-room carpet), about eight inches deep, and say ten wide, a slight cane trellis, looking like rods for basket-work, merely stained dark green on the back and ends, coming about as high as an ordinary chimney-piece; ivy trained over the trellis, to cover it a good deal, but by no means thickly, simply to wreath about it, especially at the edges; then the only flowers in this really effective stand were alternate hyacinth-glasses of blue Michaelmas daisies and of scarlet gladioli, with, between them, some pots of fern or grass, or of asparagus-leaves. The ivy itself, I was told, had, upon emergences, been cut from the woods too, and brought in and put in glasses, and trained to look all natural. And, after all, it is well to know this for any quickly got-up decoration, or for a screen to shut off some unused doorway or ugly view, at short notice.

By-the-by, too, at this season, all the trees in fresh leaf may be used just like holly in winter, by way of decoration, only by putting the cut end of the branch in a jar with water and charcoal, and then closing the mouth with a lump of the potter's clay. What can be more lovely than horse-chestnut or acacia?

But, in a stand like that which I have described, observe the good management—the tall flowers, not over *recherché*, being filled up with shrubby sort of things in perfect keeping with their style.

Bunches of holly, also, are remarkably good and effective in all such cases. In fact, for the use of holly, one must go to France for a lesson. It comes in at any time, and is used as a brilliant flower—and, indeed, the bright leaves and red berries are such as few flowers canadden.

I have seen the boxes just described filled up entirely with the ivy-grown trellis, branches like small shrubs of holly, some tall and tapering, others low and spreading, and with some one white flower, generally the single, large-fringed Chinese primroses, these being, however, comparatively few—perhaps three pots only put in amidst the holly; and the effect was perfect—warm, and green, and graceful and *distingué*—for somehow the holly is very aristocratic, and adapts itself to all circumstances with most perfect ease and grace.

Much green with a little colour is a rule that has a wide reign; and also it is remarkable how rarely one sees one colour; but crimson and buff roses, violet and pink, pale sea-green and rose-colour, or any of these, with white. This seems the prevailing thing as much in dress as in flowers, and as much in rooms as anywhere. But then, Parisians do compose room, and toilette, and flowers, all as a sort of picture.

But to go on to vases and to flowers in general. If our South Kensington shows of dinner-table decorations only were held in Paris, how different things would be!

The great idea now in arranging them, is to show each flower separately (not in that horrid way, of all others most objectionable, when, having a crowd of flowers, each flower tries to be seen, thus making up a result of a mass of excited petals, like faces turned up in a crowd)—but where the view is to let each flower repose quietly and calmly upon a bed of green. That is, after all, the natural view of

flowers; but I never saw it done perfectly till a few days ago, at Paris.

Single flowers in glases are very pretty, no doubt—just as a beautiful rose must be beautiful anywhere; and some people like very much the 'prettiness' of the fashion of having a little glass by each lady's place containing a tiny bouquet, and having by each gentleman's one flower for the button-hole. I don't admire it, as I think it breaks up the table and makes it dotty; but, when it is done, one lily-of-the-valley with its leaf attached, or a carnation and a spray of fern, and a small piece of mignonette, are very respectable modes of fulfilling the fashion. Thick-petalled, lasting flowers should of course be chosen, as it is such a bore when geraniums drop all about.

Bouquets for the hand abroad are not made up like 'the run' of English ones. The prettiest mode this year is to have a kind of fern-shaped spray of green going down the bouquet between each little group of flowers. It seems to me that in composing a bouquet, there are five or six separate bunches of green arranged first separately—some fern, for example, or sprays of rose-leaves (to mention things, as usual, that every one has at hand), and then these sprays are fastened to the centre, formed, one after each little group of azaleas or geraniums. The effect is exceedingly good; and all delicate foliage comes in exquisitely for this; and now we really have such varieties in our greenhouses. The flowers would not be mixed much—perhaps red and white in one place, and only pink in another; or perhaps blue would be alone here, and next door to it buff. The art is, not to seem to think the flowers unsuited to each other. Where an English milliner accepts imperious orders, but, to relieve her mind, puts in a wall of black lace, an English lady is a great deal too apt, following in the same line, only a little modified, to put a stout fence of green, and say that 'it softens the contrast;' the truth in the matter being, that that division alone makes any contrast at all. The proper

effect, if well done, would be harmony. Flowers for hair and dress are now very rarely mixed. You have some one flower and its own buds for all. Then, if more green is wanted, there are always sprays of ivy, drooping fronds of fern, long ribbons of delicate grass. As a general thing, however, one flower with its own leaves is enough for one person's ambition; and the result is once more, much grace and little heaviness. How awful 'corn-flowers' look when worn, in the spring, in bonnets!—red and yellow and blue! The light flower-tufts on the hair are excessively pretty; and so is the plan of having a drooping tuft on one shoulder. I never very much like seeing a head dressed with flowers, unless there are also flowers somewhere about the dress. To me there always is the feeling that some blossoms should have fallen, or been kept in the hand, or stuck into the band. It is too hard, and complete, and finished, when every scrap of flower is collected and put in the hair.

For actual use on dinner-tables, the prettiest fashion I ever have seen by far, is that of the large open vase supported on gilt branches, always so arranged as to look wide and low in proportion to its height.

Of course, in the centre of the table there must be something high; but there it seems so much more natural to have lights—a tall branch, for instance, with candles, and only at the feet two or three groups of flowers; three groups of flowers or fruit, forming a natural ornament round the foot of some high centre. Much green is again especially desirable in this place, because there is always a certain glare of light and plate, and table-cloth and dress; and a mass of green is therefore more than ever welcome to eyes that feel slightly weary, as most eyes do in London before it comes to dinner-time. I should suggest then having, if for a large or long table, some centrepiece of this kind, and placing the vase I describe at the top or bottom. But for a small table, especially a round one, the said vase itself is charming, when used for the centre ornament

—and, indeed, in such cases no other flowers are necessary; and if other flowers are used, it is all the worse for the users, who pay an increased florist's bill, and have a less pretty table.

For the flowers appropriate for filling such a vase, I will simply copy a list I took down in Paris, which seemed to me to combine all colour, and grace, and lightness, in the most charming manner.

The dish or vase, I should mention, was of plain frosted glass, shallow and wide, and rested on twisted supports of bright and frosted gilding.

The dish was itself filled up with bright dark-green moss—one of the beautiful greenhouse lycopods might well be used here. *Lycopodium denticulatum* is, perhaps, best of all for the purpose, and is easily grown anywhere, in a shady corner of the greenhouse, or in a window that will not suit many flowering plants because of want of sun. The moss was raised in the centre—not a heap, but curved upwards. The flowers were as follow: one deep-red rose, one of the palest blush white, a spray of white convolvulus, just touched with pink, a cluster of red drooping flowers (I thought of the rose acacia), one spray of pale wild-rose, one bright pink rose, a cluster of white acacia, and a drooping branch of the pink convolvulus.

It is to be remarked, the colours were all shades of rose and white. The whole thing was most perfectly bright, and fresh, and beautiful. Each flower was simply laid down on the green, fairly round the vase, no attempt being made to fill up the centre at all. The flowers just touched, and had each its own green leaves; the stems, of course, were just hidden slightly in the moss. I give this to show the style of thing, but, of course, other flowers can be used for any of those named. The great thing is, it seems to me, to have some idea to work to; and there certainly are such ideas to be picked up, sown broadcast abroad, where nobody is ashamed of trying to make themselves and everything else look their prettiest!

THE INTRODUCTORY PROCESS.

(ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DU MAURIER.)

TO write a preface is, we take it, a work of some little difficulty. Not having time at present to consider *why* it should be a matter of any difficulty at all, we will, if you please, allow it to be so, and admit that, however easily and rapidly a subject may be treated, yet the introduction to it will probably require greater care and a more delicate handling. And this becomes eminently true in the case of almost all 'social introductions,' by which term we mean the ordinary introduction of number one to number three, by the intervention of number two.

Now, unless number one has requested number two for the favour of an introduction to number three, (in which case the first mentioned person can not be offended, save by a refusal), number two should weigh well the responsibilities that he is about voluntarily to incur, by the reckless bringing together of two bodies who may already be antagonistic, or may hereafter become antagonistic to one another. Let this be your canon, that you have no right to introduce two persons to one another, without the sanction of one, or both of them, or, perhaps of their undoubtedly best friends and well-wishers.

Let us consider, 1st. *Of the person; i.e.* who should be introduced, and to whom.

2ndly. *Of the Medium; i.e.*, whether the introduction should be performed by us, or by any one better qualified for the office, by reason of his rank, station, or personal knowledge.

3rdly. *The Tempus.* As to the 'when' of an introduction: *i.e.*, whether you have chosen the fittest possible moment, or the most seasonable time for the ceremony.

4thly. *The Locus in Quo.* As to the 'where': *i.e.*, whether the place in which the contemplated introduction is to happen, is the most convenient, most advantageous spot that can possibly be selected.

5thly. *The Modus Operandi.* As to the manner of proceeding with

the rite; as to the order of names; as to their correct pronunciation; as to the number of times each is to be uttered; and upon whom devolves the duty of first speaking after the ceremony is at an end.

Surely the above considerations are sufficient to deter any fellow from rashly making known one fellow to another fellow, without previously ascertaining the wishes of either fellow on the matter in question.

Let us commence with an instance in point, where none of the considerations above enumerated enter into the operator's calculations. This we will call 'The Careless Introduction.'

Great care should be taken, previous to any unnecessary introduction, to ascertain the antecedent histories of the parties about to be made personally known to one another for the first time.

For instance, if A., walking with B., meets C., and if C., having stopped A., or A. having stopped C., commences some street-conversation of the ordinarily rapid character, which, from a stagnation of ideas in the heads of both A. and C., comes to an abrupt conclusion, then it may occur to A., just by way of doing and saying something, to introduce his friend B. to C.

The inductive process to this rash headlong act of introduction, is somewhat as follows:—

A., with B. on his arm, meets C. As neither C. nor A. have anything particular to do, they stop one another.

A. (*as if surprised.*) Hallo!

C. (*without any meaning whatever.*) Hallo! (*Both smile and shake hands.*)

B., who has not left A.'s arm, clings to him, as if fearing lest his friend should be taken away by C.; howbeit he looks another way, and wishes that some one would come and say, 'How d'ye do' to him, so as to put him on an equal footing, as it were, with A.

A. (*cheerily.*) Well—and—how are you? Eh?

C. (with equal cheeriness). Oh! I'm all right. (He emphasises 'I'm' pretty strongly, as much as to say that there are some people who are not all right.)

A. (as if much relieved). Ah! Well, that's well. (Smiles patronisingly on C.)

B., who has been resting himself on his right leg, changes to his left leg, and begins to wish more than ever that he had somebody to talk to.

A. (trying to keep up the spirited dialogue). And—er—no—you're— (He is just going to say 'very well, eh!' but pulls up short.)

C. (feeling the onus of conversation thrown upon him). You're all right, of course?

A. (resenting the idea that he must 'of course' be all right). Well—er—pretty well.

There has been nothing the matter with him, but still he does not like to feel the importance of his existence thus lowered before his friend B. B. smiles as if he'd like to join in the conversation, and begins to think that he'd better walk on, and leave A. to follow.

C. Well—er—(looks at B. as if to ask what the device he means by it. B. pretends to be abstracted in contemplation of things in general, and shifts back from his left to his right leg). Oh, I say, old fellow. (This is said confidentially to A., to show B. on what intimate terms of friendship they are. B. begins to be jealous, and gives up the notion of quitting A.'s arm.) I saw your cousin the other day.

A. (who has about fifty or sixty cousins, pretends great interest). Oh! did you really?

A. throws in 'really' to balance the sentence, as, of course, C. either did see his cousin really, or he did not at all.

C. (who has nothing else to say on the subject). Yes, I did.

A. (without the smallest curiosity). Oh!

B. shifts from his right to his left leg, and slightly presses A.'s arm. It suddenly occurs to A., that B. and C. ought to know one another. C. is just about to say 'good-bye,' but hesitates, seeing that A. looks as if he had got something to say.

A. (to C.) You know my friend B., don't you?

Rather a weak question, as, if he had known him, he would of course have spoken to him, unless there were reasons for silence.

C. (trying to appear interested in removing any such impression from A.'s mind). No—I—er—

B. smiles slightly, then suddenly becomes very grave, and looks steadily at C., as if waiting for a signal to jump on him.

A. Oh! (Affably.) Then let me introduce you.

Here A. suddenly becomes bothered as to which of the two ought to be mentioned first: whether he shall introduce B. to C. or C. to B.; and feels an inclination to pull them forcibly together, or to double them backwards and forwards, as 'Mr. B. Mr. C., Mr. C. Mr. B., now you know one another!' after the fashion supposed to be genteel and correct on the stage. C. and B. get him out of the difficulty, by taking off their hats to one another, with grim politeness, during which ceremony A. says quietly, as if to himself, and having no sort of reference to the action, 'C., B.'—and then, as if he had just wound up a couple of wax-work figures, waits to see what will happen next.

B. (glad to get a chance of saying something). I think we've met before at—(forgets where).

C. (who hasn't the slightest recollection of it).—Ah—at—er—yes, yes—

B. (quite agrees with him, and A. is delighted). Yes. I thought I knew your face.

C. (not particularly pleased, smiles). Ah! Yes—I—(wants to say, 'thought I knew your face,' but remembering that B. has just made that observation, alters the form). Yes, I thought I'd seen you somewhere.

N.B. This is a very safe remark.

A. (stultifying himself on the spot). Oh! I didn't know you knew one another.

C. (pleasantly). Oh, dear yes—and—er—(conclusively). Oh, dear yes—(feeling that he has had quite enough of B., says suddenly to A.) Good-bye.



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B. wonders whether he'll say good-bye to him.

C. (being doubtful as to whether he ought to shake hands with B., gives up the point altogether, and shakes hands with neither. Then, going, says to B., with a nervous sort of laugh, as if there was some kind of a joke in saying it). Good-bye. Delighted to have made your—er—(hurries off).

B. (speaking at the same moment). Delighted to have—er—(goes in the opposite direction with A.)

C. (to himself, going down the street). I wonder what the deuce that fellow's name was?

B. (to A.). Who was that to whom you introduced me? Eh?

Of course they won't speak when they meet again; but of this matter more anon.

This is what we have called The Careless Introduction, though, luckily, in this instance, unattended by any awkward circumstances.

But supposing that the following scene had occurred:—

A. (to C.). You know my friend B., don't you?

C. (sarcastically). Oh! is that B.? ha! ha! (laughing unpleasantly) and your friend (horribly emphasised) too? ha! ha!

A. (bewildered). Eh! why—I (takes off his hat, and puts it on again for no particular reason).

B. (who, having disengaged himself from A.'s arm, approaches C. viciously). So, sir, we do meet, do we? (fumbling in his pocket). You may remember what I promised you—(fumbling harder than ever in his coat tails) a horse—(fumbling in his breast pocket) a horse-whipping (discovers that this is the only day for the last six weeks that he has come out without the horse-whip).

C. (sneeringly). If you dare—

B. (furiously). Dare!!—I'll—

A. But can't—won't—(words fail him; he is pushed aside by B.)

B. (to A. violently). I beg, sir, you'll not meddle.

Crowd (who have quickly collected, addressing A.). You got out, will yer? (A. regards them indignantly.)

C. (trembling with suppressed rage). I have no wish for a street row. (About to move off.)

Crowd (disappointed). Yah! (to B.). Give it him, little 'un.

A. Quite right, (to C.). You'd better go, we can settle it quietly.

C. (vociferating). Quietly! It's through you, sir, (to A.) that—

B. You're a coward, sir! (to C.)

C. (saying something fierce indistinctly). Thro-o-o-o-o—

A. (addressing both). But look here, you know—

Crowd (delighted). Hooray! don't stand none of his nonsense. (Alluding to A.)

Policeman (suddenly appearing on the scene). Now what's all this here?

Crowd (giving A. into custody). That's him, Peeler!

Little boy (gratuitously). I seed him do it.

Policeman (in an off-hand manner). Here, I can't have any of this 'ere obstruction no longer, (to C.). Now, sir, do you give this person in charge? (alluding to A.)

C. (who would like to do it very much, but is withheld by a stern sense of justice). No.

Policeman. Well, then (in a conciliatory tone), don't go a loitering any longer. Come (to the crowd), you move on now, there ain't nothing: move on, or I'll have some on you in two two's, I will. (Exeunt little boys hastily, and the party breaks up, B. having vanished some time since.)

B. and C. will henceforth always speak of A. as a meddling fellow. And A. will have learnt the lesson that no introduction must be entered upon without due care, and conscientious observance of all the precautions hereinbefore set down. We will renew this most important subject at some future, but no very distant, time.



ON FURNISHING.

'HOW shall we furnish our drawing-room? What shall be the colour of its walls? Of what material shall we have the curtains? And what about the library?' These and a host of similar questions, which lead to endless discussion and speculation, suggest themselves to every newly-married couple who have just bought a new house or inherited an old one, and who look forward with a considerable amount of pleasure to the idea of furnishing it. Patterns of chintz, reps, and silk are scattered over the tables and chairs, while rolls of various stuffs occupy the sofas. The walls, too, are covered with sundry stripes of paper, tacked on to test the different shades of colour and the effect of the designs. There is nothing so disagreeable or amusing, according to the mood you are in, as the house where the matter of furnishing is under discussion. You hear of little else from morning to night; you are carried off from one shop to another; you are called upon to listen to various suggestions, and to weigh pros and cons again and again; and if you do not happen to be in the humour for it, the trial to temper and patience is considerable.

But it is really a very important question, and one which is not confined to the newly married. People who have lived for years in a large town, and have by patient industry acquired a sufficient independence to enable them to buy or rent a place in the country; or who have to begin life in a small two-windowed house in some dull street, like Portugal Street or the neighbourhood of Ebury Street; or those who cannot aspire beyond unfurnished lodgings in Sloane Street, have one and all an interest in furnishing. They wish, both naturally and wisely, to make their house or rooms as pretty as their means will allow; and as tables and chairs must be got, and the walls must be papered or coloured, they must take some trouble about these things if they wish for comfort. It is a great

mistake to throw cold water upon the efforts which people make to render their rooms cheerful and gay. It is a great mistake not to take trouble about it ourselves; and even they who cry out against making so much fuss about a few tables and chairs are oftentimes the very people who are most attached to their own corner, their own pet sofa, and their own creature comforts; only they like to have these things without even trouble or forethought on their part, preferring to sit still unmolested, engaged in needlework, or absorbed in a book, while the work is being carried on which is eventually to administer to their comfort. But independent of this, what a history a room can tell! what a revelation it often is of the mind and habits of the owner!

There is a story told of a lady who is said to have the faculty of seeing the world of spirits by which we are surrounded, and who affirms that we are, each one of us, encompassed by an atmosphere peculiar to ourselves; so that she can detect in what part of the room we have been standing, or in what chair we have been sitting. So in a similar manner we can ourselves form a shrewd guess as to the mind and habits of those whose rooms we enter, for their stamp is on them. When we call upon persons whom we have never met, and are 'shown in' to the library or morning room, our eye quickly travels over it, and, almost at a glance, we take in the character, and taste, and inclination of our hostess. We each have our own peculiarities, which we impress upon everything which belongs to us. No matter where we go, we leave their tokens everywhere. If we take a lodging by the seaside the chances are that we turn the furniture about in such a way as to change the whole appearance of the room. Some have this knack more than others; and in their hands the dreariest lodging puts on an air of comfort. The simplest things acquire, under their auspices, a touch of refinement, which is often want

ing where wealth abounds. But apart from this there is real moral good in furnishing your rooms well. By *well* we do not mean expensively, but in good taste. The more comfortable and bright you make your house, the more your husband and children will gather round it; finding there, and not elsewhere, their rest and enjoyment after the fatigues and business of the day. They look forward to their evenings at home, and learn to grudge the time that is spent out of it. They find it so clean; so fresh and quiet; so full of refinement and good taste: everything in its place without formality or stiffness.

Who has not a tender recollection of his mother's room, where all the family gathered together in the long twilight of the winter evenings before dinner? Perhaps the walls were partly hung with chintz, enlivened by pictures set in panels here and there; or it may be that they were only coloured, in distemper, a soft pearly grey with quaint old picture-frames and looking-glasses reflecting the odd bits of china which she had collected together at little or no expense. At all events, the young wife may, by a judicious selection and arrangement of the furniture of her rooms, make her house the very type of all that is pleasant, and so wean her husband from his bachelor ways, and draw him off from his clubs and smoking-rooms to be her companion.

In giving a few hints upon furnishing, we crave the indulgence of our readers, and beg an immunity from the snubs of those who are, by way of despising anything so mundane, maintaining as we do, *en passant*, that it is a study which is not so contemptible as it seems, but which has a beneficial influence upon the mind and life.

It is a very difficult subject to write about, because there is such a diversity of tastes. There is what may be called 'good taste,' 'bad taste,' and 'no taste at all;' and of these the third is better than the second, for it may avoid the mistakes into which 'bad taste,' must inevitably fall.

Some people have a horror of

good taste, because it is, they say, so ruinously expensive; and they bless their stars that they have none of it. It is possible that they may have suffered through its indulgence, because it is too true that a desire to gratify it at every cost has often accompanied it. But we maintain that it need not be ruinous. In the hands of the unprincipled many good things become bad. Of course the poorer we are the more difficult it will be to realize the effect we wish to produce; but it does not at all follow that everything that is cheap must be ugly.

We remember to have heard it said by one who had great experience in furnishing, and who was by no means rich when she began life, that it was so pleasant to be obliged to contrive; that the necessity for doing so added greatly to its interest and amusement. We know so well what she meant. To go with a well-filled purse where we like and buy what we please is pleasant enough; but to contrive a good and pleasing effect out of scanty materials needs the eye, mind, and hand of an artist, and is infinitely more satisfactory. We are reminded of a room we saw in France which was beautifully decorated. The walls were painted in panels, the larger ones representing the elements and the smaller ones the seasons. The painting was admirable, and the ideas evidently suggested by a well-directed imagination. It was all the handiwork of the lady of the house, who said that she could not afford to employ any one to do it, and that the alternative lay between doing it herself or shutting up the room altogether.

In these days, people of all classes are wise enough to use their talents, if they have any, and not to despise those who have. But this kind of decoration is scarcely what we mean by furnishing, which we consider to have more especial reference to tables and chairs, to curtains and carpets. Such a gift as that which our French friend possessed is rare. Sir Coutts Lindsay, Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, the Duchess of Cleveland, and Mr. John Pollen, are among the few who are

similarly gifted. Happily, not so rare is the faculty of well selecting well assorting, and well arranging the furniture of a room.

In entering more fully into this subject, it will be necessary to classify the various styles of furnishing, so far as we can do so.

There are what we will call, for the sake of distinction, the dull style, the upholstery style, the rich, the architectural, the antiquarian, the luxurious, and the meretricious styles.

In the first place, we would lay down as a fundamental principle in furnishing, that the end in view should be to make a house or a room cheerful, comfortable, and liveable. We say liveable, because there are so many which, though handsomely furnished, are dreary in the extreme, and the very thought of living in them makes one shudder. Others captivate us by their picturesque appearance, and we are inclined towards them; but one moment's peep inside dispels every wish of the kind. They are so dismal, the rooms are low, dark, and small, and an atmosphere of dankness pervades the whole.

The dull style of furnishing is, like every other form of dullness, very common. The prevailing tints are drab, oak, and a dingy red. There is much neatness about it. The highly-polished round table stands universally in the middle of the room, with perhaps some wax flowers—generally water-lilies, under a glass shade—in the centre; or, it may be, a bit of needlework and beads for a lamp-stand at night, and a tall lanky glass vase for flowers by day. A few well-bound books are placed upon the table at equal distances, all radiating from the centre. The carpet is a flowery pattern on a red ground, a few shades darker than the curtains, which are also red with stripes, or flowers of brown and drab. The sofa and arm-chairs have the same dull covering. There is usually a card-table; and red silk bannerscreens are placed, like mutes, on each side of the fire. One never goes into the room without feeling inclined to yawn, and a sense of

depression comes over one after a few minutes. It is essentially dull and drab—respectable,—certainly, but painfully dull.

The upholstery style is generally found where riches predominate over both mind or taste. There are people who have no idea how to set about furnishing. They think that it must be quite right if they trust it to the upholsterer, whose *métier* they consider it to be to do the thing in right and proper style. So they go to some, perhaps first-rate, upholsterer, and tell him the sum they intend to spend, and give him *carte blanche* to do as he likes, providing he makes a good show and keeps within the specified amount. The upholsterer goes down with rule and tape, and takes all the dimensions, and he stamps himself and his shop upon the whole house. He has but one idea. The drawing-room must be white and gold; the dining-room red and mahogany; and the library, oak and leather. In every corner you see the upholsterer's mind; in the damask ottomans and curtains, and heavy gilded cornice of the drawing-room; in the elaborate oak bookcases and table, and leather sofas and chairs of the library, and in the handsome (?) sideboard of the dining-room. We remember being taken over a newly-furnished house which had given employment to a whole army of London upholsterers, and we were asked how we liked 'this' and 'that'; and before we could devise a suitable reply, we were assured that *carte blanche* had been given; that it had been all put into "So-and-so's" hands because they had done all the furnishing for the Earl of Q—. In short, the house was simply a sample of what an upholsterer's ware-rooms can supply. There was no stint. There was plenty of *luxé*; but it all lacked a master-mind directing and overruling the whole. It smelt of the shop.

The rich style is perhaps the worst of all, because it is so insolent in its pride. It has the same defect as the upholstery style, for it is that style gilded *à l'outrance*. Wealth is stamped on every corner. Heavy

massive wealth overpowers it all, and the furniture is chosen not so much for its utility, as for the opportunity it affords of displaying the unbounded riches of its owner. There is a surfeit of money about it all.

The architectural style of furnishing has its charms for those who have a monomania for everything that is Gothic. To us, it is especially disagreeable. The chairs are so uncomfortable and straight-backed; everything is angular and hard, suggestive of stiff discomfort. We remember a house where this style was carried to a great excess. The very bedposts were Gothic: they were made of brass, with a ribbon running round them, on which was painted the family motto in red letters. The curtains had the arms and motto woven in them, and the papers bore the same device. When we saw it, we thanked Heaven we were not going to sleep in those beds. Imagine the horrors of a nightmare of griffins impaled, or lions rampant, or the ceaselessness of the motto from which one could never escape, turn which way one would. In another house, an heraldic tree sprang from the centre of one of the chimney-pieces, and occupied the whole of one side of the room, the ceiling resembling that of a cloister. One would gladly escape from such a room to the furthest attic, where this architectural monomania had not reached. In another, the bed was hung with heavy crimson stuff, which was supported by iron rods of curious device, terminating in an exaggerated form of a bishop's pastoral staff; and the Gothic bathing-machine which was meant for a wardrobe, was suggestive of reminiscences of one's childhood that were anything but pleasant. Oh no! let us eschew this style, and be thankful that we have been preserved from it hitherto.

The antiquarian style is far more pleasing. The picturesque quaintness is most amusing, and the odd things one stumbles upon here and there take one quite by surprise. But it has its dreary side. The dark panelling, the uncomfortable chairs, whose only recommendation is their antiquity; the comfortless

settee, in which it was supposed some great man had sat a century or two ago; the table with its multitude of legs preventing one's ever getting near it; the scornful contempt for all the improvements of the nineteenth century, makes the house very uncomfortable, very unsuited to daily life; more adapted for lionizing than for living in.

Not so the artistic style, which has great recommendations, but is objectionable, inasmuch as there is often a certain amount of eccentricity about it, which shelters itself behind the idea that it is artistic. Odd things are done, doubtful theories are carried out as to colour and form, and the rooms themselves are often arranged more like 'studios' than living rooms for ordinary mortals.

The luxurious style speaks for itself, and the infinite variety of easy lounging-chairs and sofas, the soft carpets, and beautiful fabrics used for curtains, make it peculiarly inviting; but it, too, has its faults. There is generally no solidity about it; nothing practical or suggestive of occupation and work; no table at which you can write a letter. The whole speaks of idleness and ease, and is suited to the life of a Sybarite. The *dolce far niente* is stamped upon it too plainly. It wants force, strength of character, and without great care it will drift away into the meretricious style, which is luxury in its enervating form.

This style abounds in white and gold, and beautifully-tinted walls half darkened by rose-coloured blinds, and surrounded by balconies filled with evergreens and bright flowers, and ornamented with arches of creepers. Every landing has its groups of flowers and its divans; and the rooms abound in corners which are shut off by means of velvet screens or trellis-work of cane covered with creepers. In the meretricious style the study is to consider the personal appearance of the occupants. There is a great amount of looking-glass; a profusion of drapery in the shape of *portières* and curtains. The effect is pretty, but it is all more or less

a sham. The lace is not real, the gilding and decoration inferior, the whole of the ornamentation not even second-rate. It is pretentious, and attempts to pass itself off for something that it is not; and there is no other name for it but meretricious.

Rose-coloured blinds especially belong to this style; and, strange to say, this peculiar kind of furnishing has found its way to unwonted places. We have been told that a reverend divine who has a prebendal stall, and lives under the shadow of one of our ancient cathedrals, has adopted these meretricious blinds. They must contrast strangely with the ancient walls which surround them, and more strangely still with the lives of the founders of that venerable edifice. Imagine for a moment one of the old monks coming back to his former haunts, and finding his refectory or dormitory not only converted into a dwelling-house for the family man who now occupies his place, but the very canon himself, his wife, and bevy of fair daughters blushing to the very tips of their ears under the influence of rose-coloured blinds!

It is time we should broach our own theory upon furnishing—for we, too, have one.

But we will preface the few remarks we shall make by saying that in all the various styles we have mentioned there is a mixture of good, if we except the rich and upholstery styles, which are, in our opinion, wholly bad. The danger in adopting any one particular style lies in forcing its peculiarities where they are inappropriate. For instance, who would ever dream of furnishing a palace such as Chatsworth, Arundel Castle, Burleigh, or Longleat, like a cottage in Surrey or a villa at Putney? The antiquarian, architectural, artistic, and luxurious styles can all suggest useful hints. But if any attempt is made to make the place subservient to any one of them, instead of their being subservient to the place, we fear that the result will be a failure. Just as certain landscape-gardeners set their faces against studying the peculiar features of the situation, and

cut down everything that interferes with their preconceived ideas. They simply repeat themselves again and again to the injury of what might be really beautiful.

The great point in furnishing is to study well the aspect, the general style of the house, and to make all our efforts harmonize with it, for incongruity is a great offence against good taste. There is a fitness in things which should never be lost sight of if we desire success. We know of an instance where, in an old-fashioned house abounding in mullioned windows which run high up into the ceiling, the present possessor has hung all the rooms with Chinese papers, and fitted them up with light-coloured ultra-modern furniture, as inconsistently as if you were to decorate Westminster Abbey like the Italian Opera-House.

It would not be difficult to multiply instances where furniture has been transplanted from one house to another without the smallest reference to its appropriateness.

Our theory is that no one thing should catch the eye. There should be harmony throughout; and we would recommend that great attention be paid to the colour of the walls. If they, the ceiling, and the carpet are well selected, all other points of detail are like the finishing touches of a picture. The right tone having been attained the rest is comparatively easy.

We have found greys, light greens, and pale mauve to work up well; and the less pattern there is in the paper the better, unless, for some special reason, a chintz paper is desired. If the room faces the south a cool grey or mauve is good; and for a north room we have seen a yellowish-green answer admirably, imparting to the room the appearance of sunshine.

As a rule, we have found it best to avoid reds, especially a dark-red, which is offensively dingy.

Blue is a dangerous colour to use. It is so apt to make a room either gaudy or cold; though we have seen it effectively used with pink to give a Pompadour look.

For carpets we incline to small inoffensive patterns, and generally

avoid those which are flowery, as being in theory and in effect bad.

As to the arrangement of the furniture it is difficult to say much, as everything depends upon what it consists of. But we have generally found it desirable to keep the centre of the room and the space before the fire quite free, and to eschew a round table. If we must have one we prefer pushing it into some corner of the room—anywhere but in the middle.

We once asked a lady, who was conspicuous for the excellent taste she displayed in furnishing her rooms, wherein her secret lay, and she said that she invariably made it a rule never to employ any one person exclusively. She bought what she wanted wherever she could find it; and certainly the result was perfect. There was a harmony and a variety that was most pleasing.

We will, before we bring this paper to an end, describe two or three rooms which have appeared to us as singularly perfect.

One was the room of a gentleman, who was more of a man of business and less of an idle man than any we know. The walls were a pale but warm stone colour; on them hung some beautiful pictures in curious old Florentine frames, through the interstices of which the colour of the walls might be seen. Opposite the fireplace were two buhl cabinets filled with rare bronzes. On one side of the fire was the large and massive buhl writing-table, which seemed made for business. The carpet was crimson, and the curtains were of chintz, with a pattern of well-drawn and well-coloured carnations. Book-cases of ebony and tortoiseshell occupied either side of the fireplace. There certainly never was a more inviting or a less dull room.

Another was quite different. It was the drawing-room of a small house near Grosvenor Square. The walls were a pearly French grey—of that peculiar shade which suggests mother-of-pearl. The curtains were of turquoise blue silk, lined with white silk. The carpet was a shade of crimson, and the prevailing colours of the chintz coverings of the

chairs, sofas, and ottomans were pink and blue on a white ground.

Another small room, which we thought at the time was very successful, was papered with a dark-blue flock-paper without any pattern on it, which gave it the appearance of velvet. The walls were covered with pictures, quaint looking-glasses, curious china on gilt brackets, arranged with and without method. A small three-cornered writing-table filled up one angle, and a sofa and two arm-chairs completed the furniture of this tiny room. The curtains were of muslin, edged with pink calico and lace. This was a small unfurnished lodging which our friend had taken and had fitted up at a small expense.

When we speak of silk curtains and gilding, and describe rooms of that class, we do not by any means think that anything less than that is to be despised. Far from it. One of the most cheerful rooms we ever remember was a small morning-room papered with a light-green moiré paper finished with a simple moulding. The curtains were of chintz—a small Persian pattern, with a border, and the carpet was red moss. The tables and chairs were small, and in keeping with the room—all of good form, but made of American birch, and French-polished. It was the gayest, most liveable room we ever saw. It raised one's spirits to go into it; and the well-filled book-cases which occupied two small recesses opposite the fireplace gave sufficient proof that no one need be dull in this small, simply-furnished room.

It would seem almost invidious to name any one upholsterer or decorator when there are so many that are good. But, in every case, we would again and again repeat that in furnishing it is necessary that there should be a master-mind directing every detail. It is quite possible that this may involve a considerable amount of trouble; and where the purse is not well filled, it is not only unavoidable, but absolutely indispensable; for it is only by taking trouble that we can hope to obtain a good result at a small cost.

HUMAN PICKLES.

WHEN the First Gentleman in Europe ruled the land; when certain ladies were 'toasted' at dinner-parties throughout the kingdom; when gentlemen wore huge white cravats, and tight short-waisted coats were in vogue; when Bond Street was the fashionable London promenade; when stage-coaches rattled through the streets, and the shrill railway whistle was unheard, it behoved every one who made any pretence of mixing in the *beau monde* to leave the grimy metropolis some time during the year for one of the English watering-places. The little village of Brighthelmstone was fast growing into the fashionable town of Brighton, and was yearly visited by many besides the fine gentleman who, with his chosen friends, held nightly orgies in the dismal tea-garden mockery of semi-Moorish, semi-Turkish architecture; but as yet, with few exceptions, the mass of Londoners fled inland. The London and Brighton Railway was not thought of, and 'Eight hours at the sea-side for half a crown,' was an impossibility; while for all but those with plenty of time and long purses, excursions beyond Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest were not to be dreamt of.

Still for all that there were certain towns every year well thronged with visitors. Bath, Cheltenham, Harrogate, Tunbridge, all had their periodical influx. People who, under the pretence of drinking mineral waters, the very taste of which now-a-days is scarcely known, flocked to these fashionable resorts, and walked, danced, dressed, and flirted as their grandchildren do at the present time at Biarritz and Baden-Baden. The glory of our English mineral springs has departed. Where is the *Beau Nash* of other days; where the public balls, the solemn card-parties, the links, the music, the sedan-chairs, the coaches? All, all have gone, faded away into dust, as we and our amusements must fade in like manner, to give place to new faces, new dresses, new pleasures, and a new generation. The very

use of mineral waters has been forgotten by the English, except that sometimes Mrs. Bull suggests to her husband that the springs of Interlacken and a judicious diet of goat's whey may bring back the roses to the cheek of their dear Julia; and that Major Rook, who has such a wonderful knack of turning up the king at *écarté*, and gives such delightful little card-parties, goes periodically to Baden-Baden for the benefit of his health. Certainly, too, gentlemen who speculate heavily, are occasionally ordered off to *Bonlogne*, sometimes at an hour's notice, to try the effects of the bathing there to recruit their shattered frames; but with these few exceptions, the number of English who make any pretence of deriving benefit from the use of mineral springs is small.

Not so with our friends and allies across the Channel. The French, Germans, and Italians have a partiality, not only for the attendant pleasures, but for the actual water cure; and it is to one of their bathing settlements to which I intend to introduce you. Not, may it please you, to semi-English *Boulogne*, with its chattering, gossiping promenade, its cathedral and its casino; not to *Dieppe*, with its sociable water-parties, where a lady accepts the escort of a gentleman for a swim in the same way she might his hand for a quadrille; not to *Calais* the dismal, or *Ostend* the every-way-objectionable. We may, if you are so minded, bestow a passing glance at whichever of those places you please; but our destination lies far inland, across the dreary, sandy plain, through the low marshy districts, with the apparently interminable rows of poplars. Past country stations we must dash in the express train for *Paris*, catching momentary glimpses of quaint villages, quaint costumes, and quaint faces; the train slackens speed, and stops at a platform, '*Vingt minutes d'arrêt, messieurs.*' Military uniforms, fierce moustaches, country women with baskets, bearded men

in blouses, swords, cocked hats, sour wine, and tobacco; then the blowing of a horn, and once more *en route* for Paris. But not to linger in that world-renowned city. More train, more cigars, more uniforms, more clattering and jabbering, more flat country and poplars; but now with faint, misty blue hills in the extreme distance, and at length a halt of the train for the examination of the baggage. The boundary line is crossed, and we are in Switzerland.

Now as each succeeding summer takes an increased number of English to ramble about the Alps—as artists have painted, photographers photographed, and guide-book manufacturers romanced in the Tyrol—it may be thought that any description, unless of a route diverging much from the beaten track, such as the ascent of a hitherto inaccessible peak, or the exploration of a dangerously crevassed glacier, must lack interest; but, may it please you, the village to which I am about to introduce you depends but little on its scenery for its interest; and though it lies right in the beaten path, but few remain there a sufficient time to learn its manners and customs: in short, it is my desire to take you with me to Loèche-les-Bains, not as a tourist, knapsack on back and alpenstock in hand, but as a bather, with a neat flannel bathing-gown at the bottom of your portmanteau.

The situation of Loèche-les-Bains, or Loukerbad, as it is called by the Germans, is more curious than beautiful. It is a small village, built, with the exception of one or two houses, of wood, and clustered round the hot springs. It is placed in a natural basin, and is almost surrounded by apparently inaccessible walls of bare rock, which, although not destitute of a certain savage grandeur and picturesqueness, can hardly be said to exhibit the beauties of Alpine scenery in perfection. There are two ways of approaching Loèche-les-Bains, one by the valley of the Rhone to Loèche, and from thence by a steep but good carriage-road to the baths; the other by the most wonderful mule-pass in Swit-

zerland, down a precipice which from the bottom appears scarcely cleft sufficiently to afford a footing for anything but a goat or a chamois. It need scarcely be said that invalids visiting the baths usually prefer the former route; for although the latter, known as the Gemmi pass, is perfectly safe to traverse, the awful precipices and walls of rock are trying to weak nerves, the path by which adventurous tourists descend being in many places actually hewn from out the solid perpendicular rock, and seldom exceeding three or four feet in width.

Loèche-les-Bains being situate at the foot of these precipices suffers in winter much from avalanches; but at that time it is deserted, the bathing season only lasting from the commencement of June to the end of September, during which months there is no danger to be apprehended from the falling snow. The village itself is unpretending enough, even the hotels, with the exception of the *Hôtel des Alpes*, being of wood, but nevertheless affording tolerably good accommodation for those who are not over particular. Some half-dozen shops, where inferior articles are sold at high prices, and a few wretched *châlets*, together with these hotels, complete the village, with the exception of the baths themselves. The hot springs which supply them are so numerous, that nine-tenths of the mineral water is not used, and runs into the river Dala, ultimately to mingle with the mighty Rhone. However, it is more of the habits and customs of the bathers that I wish to treat than of the place itself.

Let us take a day in the water. It is half-past six in the morning, and a bell is clamouring forth as if it enjoyed the joke. 'Lady and gentlemen bathers,' it says to those who know how to interpret the accents which fall from its iron tongue—'Lady and gentlemen bathers, it is time for you to bestir yourselves;' and accordingly, yawning and stretching, those who are trying the water cure rouse themselves and get out of bed preparatory to the bath.

A knock at the door and simul-

taneous entrance of the waiter. 'Will monsieur take coffee or chocolate this morning?' Monsieur will take coffee, and presently it is brought to him in his room, together with a small roll, with which he refreshes himself while dressing: this latter operation, however, does not take much time; a long serge gown covers monsieur from his neck to his ankles, a small cap, more or less jaunty according to the dandyism of the wearer, covers his head, and a pair of slippers his feet: this done, monsieur is fully equipped for his morning bath; and after a matutinal cigarette (if not forbidden by the doctor) he sallies forth from his hotel for the hot springs. It is true, there are dressing-rooms attached to the bathing establishment; but as it is only situate a few yards from the door of the hotel, monsieur—ay, madame and mademoiselle also—usually prefers to cross the road in his bathing costume to the trouble of dressing and undressing.

The baths, of which there are several in the village, are, with the exception of one dismal stone building, little better than wooden sheds, having high pointed roofs with a lantern or belfry at the top, which admits light to those soaking within. Viewed externally, they resemble cowsheds; internally, it is quite impossible to liken them to anything. On first entering, the sudden change from brilliant sunlight to comparative darkness prevents visitors for some minutes from discerning anything; but on their eyes becoming more accustomed to the light, they find themselves in a tolerably spacious chamber, entirely filled with water, but crossed by a light bridge a few inches above the surface. There are rows of small doors on each side which communicate with the dressing-rooms; and from which about an hour after the bell has sounded come tripping the ladies and gentlemen, clothed as already described, for their morning bath. They descend a few steps and then quietly take their seats on benches placed beneath the water, which in this attitude reaches to their chins, and settle themselves comfortably for their morning's stew. The tempe-

rature is very high, the hot springs on leaving the soil attaining a temperature of about 120°: it is almost needless to say that the water is somewhat cooled before being used for the baths.

As those using the baths for the benefit of their health are forced to spend their entire morning up to their chins in water, everything is done to render the four hours as little irksome as possible. In the centre of each of the compartments, for the bridge divides the bath, rises a gaily-ornamented vase filled with flowers, while before each bather float small trays on which are placed coffee, newspapers, novels, chess-boards, or whatever may be chosen by the invalids to help them to wile away the time. Flirtations, and various games and discussions are eagerly carried on in the water, though with regard to the latter, religious controversy is especially forbidden by the regulations; and while on this subject it may be mentioned that stringent rules for the proper preservation of decorum are rigorously enforced. While messieurs and mesdames are in the bath their friends, both male and female, who are not themselves trying the hot-water cure through the bridge, and keep up a lively conversation with their immersed acquaintances, and merry peals of laughter continually resound through the building: occasionally a tourist whose curiosity has been inflamed by guide-books, enters timorously and stares around him in blank amazement; and well he may, for the sight of some score of heads, some grizzled and wrinkled, others bright and pretty, emerging from hot water and without any visible bodies to support them, is certainly well calculated to astonish those who view it for the first time. Use, we are told, is second nature, and certainly after the first few days the bathers appear to be as much at home in the water as on land. Of course, among the multitude of those who use the baths, there are some whose sufferings have drawn their faces into permanent expressions of pain; while others have the unmistakable stamp of death upon their countenances; but these are

the exceptions: ghastly ones too they are, and often serve to check the laughter of visitors which might otherwise be aroused by their singular appearance.

In conversation, reading, and games the allotted four hours rapidly pass away; the bell sounds again, the bathers flock from the water to their hotel, there, in accordance with the medical decree, to pass an hour in bed. After that, they dress, donning this time their gayest robes and brightest colours; then a third time the bell clangs forth, and the whole party descend to the *salle à manger* for the first great meal of the day, the *déjeuner-à-la-fourchette*.

Six courses of various made dishes, coffee, chocolate, claret, Bordeaux, eggs, absinthe, and causerie, laughing, flirting, jesting, scandal, politics, and small talk, buxom ladies with caps and fronts, pretty girls with hair dressed à l'impératrice, gentlemen with beards of every shape and hue, old and feeble, young and lively, perpetual cries for the waiters, and an occasional disturbance caused by late arrivals—imagine all this, with a never-ceasing undercurrent of jangling, clattering, jabbering, and rustling, and you will have some faint idea of the scene presented at our hotel during the *déjeuner*.

Supposing you, my reader, to still retain your English prejudice of liking your breakfast earlier in the day, you will now have ample time to look around you and note the appearance of your fellow-bathers, when habited in ordinary costume.

There then, behold! At the head of the table sits a Cardinal! Perchance this morning you noticed in the water an old, wizened, yellow, cadaverous little man, who seated himself apart from the more noisy bathers; but I much doubt if you recognize him again in his red robe and skull-cap—so much does the bathing dress sink all to the same level; though, for that matter, ordinary costume is not to be relied upon as a test of caste. That handsome, well-dressed youth, who talks so much, and ever eats and drinks of the best, is the son of a watchmaker at Geneva, while his

neighbour, with a grizzled moustache, and a red ribbon in his buttonhole, who has just made so great a disturbance because the remnant of his yesterday's wine has not been brought to him, is an Italian count, with a villa on the lake of Como, and a palace in Turin. Madame, again, seated at his right hand, is an opera-singer; and report says that the young demoiselle who looked so sallow and hollow-cheeked in the water this morning, but who is now so plump and rosy, is but a dancer, and commenced her career in a travelling circus. Be that as it may, every one is sociable at Loèche-les-Bains, and the hours, whether in water or on land, pass quickly enough to those whose health and spirits permit them to join in the society. A chance visitor, however, is scarcely likely to find much pleasure in the place, when his curiosity has been gratified by a sight of the baths. The hotel-keepers know he is not a bather, and will not remain more than one night, so do not pay much attention to him, and the bathers usually wait to make acquaintance in the water.

The *déjeuner* concluded, there is yet a short time allowed to the invalids before proceeding to their second soak. The gentlemen light their cigars, the ladies amuse themselves in the *salon*, some playing on the piano—about which perhaps the less said the better—others reading or talking. There is a promenade at Loèche-les-Bains, from whence a good view is obtained, and thither many of the bathers stroll in the interval previous to their second immersion, and listen with a feeble show of interest to the strains of some wandering brass band, or itinerant barrel-organ, the while they stare in at shop-windows at coloured views of the village without recognizing them, or lazily turn over the everlasting carved wood salad spoons and nutcrackers, in the vain hope of coming upon something they have not seen before. Even the consolation to ladies of criticising each other's dresses is wanting here, for there are no shops where purchases can be made in the way of grand attire, and the carriage of luggage

by coach or train is a serious item in continental travelling, and one against which *Paterfamilias*, be he French or English, is apt to rebel; consequently, after two or three days' stay, the contents of my lady's wardrobe are revealed, and all interest in her—as far as her dress is concerned—is at an end. However, finding what amusement they can, the visitors stroll and dawdle about till the time for the second bath arrives, which need not be described, being but a repetition of the first—the same faces, the same dresses, and the same amusements. After a second four hours' parboiling, the bell sounds again, and the bathers rush from the water to prepare for the great event of the day—dinner.

This meal is little more than a repetition of the *déjeuner*, with twice the number of courses, and protracted to an indefinite length; but everything must come to an end, and after about two hours at table, the ladies and gentlemen all adjourn together to the *salon* to finish the evening.

With a little music, a great deal of tobacco smoke, a fair amount of sentimentalism, a few cups of coffee, a short stroll if the weather be favourable, an occasional game at piquet or *écarté*, and a *petit verre*, the day is concluded; and the party of bathers retire to rest at an early hour, to go through the same course the next and every succeeding day for three weeks, when the cure is supposed to be completed.

Let us count the way in which these bathers fill up their twenty-four hours. Nine are spent in bed, eight in the water, three in eating and drinking, one and a half in dressing, and the remaining two and a half in dawdling and sauntering. Let us hope it does them good.*

Though the greater part of those who make any stay at *Loèche-les-Bains* are there for the benefit of their health, there are several who may be described as supernume-

ries, or hangers-on. For example, *Madame* is recommended by the family doctor to try the baths, and *Monsieur* and *Mademoiselle* bear her company on land, although they most probably decline to do so in water; for pleasant as stewing for eight hours a day may be, as a cure for disease it can hardly be considered either exhilarating or amusing.

For these hangers-on, unless possessed of a well-trained and contented spirit, *Loèche-les-Bains* must be the dullest of dull places. As previously stated, it is situated in a basin formed by surrounding mountains, with only two exits, one up a precipice, and the other down the valley of the *Dala*. The latter is of course the principal walk or ride, the other presenting difficulties which many do not care to face, though the wonders of the ascent, and the magnificent view from the summit, amply repay those who undertake the task. At the top of the pass is a small lake, called the *Dauben See*, which is interesting for the wild, weird, bleak nakedness of the surrounding scenery; whilst yet a little further is the solitary chalet of *Schwarzenbach*, in which *Werner* laid the scene of his gloomy tragedy, 'The Twenty-fourth of February.'

There is yet another excursion, though but a short one, from *Loèche-les-Bains*, but no tourist should omit to make it. Those acquainted with the place will know that I allude to 'The Ladders.' A walk of about two miles, the latter part of the path being through a pine forest, from whence, through openings amidst the trees, very fine views of the valley of the *Dala* are to be had, leads to this remarkable spot.

High above upon the mountain side lies the village of *Albinen*, to reach which from *Loèche-les-Bains*, the only way without making a détour of some miles, is up the side of a perpendicular wall of rock, which even a *chamois*-hunter would hardly attempt to scale without some assistance. To render this way practicable, a series of rough wooden ladders, eight in number, are rudely fastened to the rock, resting on such narrow ledges as

* In giving this account, I have only narrated what takes place amongst one set of bathers at one hotel. The other hotels and baths may have different arrangements for anything I know to the contrary.

Nature has afforded. The ascent of these, or, still worse, the descent, is not to be lightly attempted; for though securely fixed they are given to shift slightly, with the weight of the climber, and the knowledge of a precipice several hundred feet in depth immediately below, does not help to make the motion pleasant to the adventurous tourist. Still, the inhabitants trip lightly up and down at all hours of the day and night, sometimes, too, with a little more brandy or kirchwasser in their heads than is good for them, and never come to grief. It is said that when two mountaineers meet on these ladders, one swings round to the inside, and holds on by his hands till the other has passed: but though it may be, and doubtless has been done, I much doubt its frequent occurrence; the customary plan being for those commencing the ascent or descent, to utter a few cries, which shape themselves into a rough song, to warn any one who may be on the ladders that some one is approaching. After scaling the rocks by means of this rude help, a rough mountain path leads to Albinen, which is chiefly remarkable for being a thoroughly Swiss village, and affording a fine view, which, however, is better obtained from the Col de Torrent, the ascent of which can be made from this village. Before quitting 'The Ladders,' it may be mentioned that this novel route has given rise to a curious addition to the costume of the fair inhabitants of Albinen, they wearing an article of attire generally supposed to be the exclusive property of the sterner sex. When ascending or descending the ladders, their petticoats are tucked round their waists, and there is little to distinguish them from boys in their appearance.

There is another way to return to Loèche-les-Bains from Albinen, but it necessitates a great round—in fact, more than doubling the distance; but the path is pretty, and there are no ladders.

You, my readers, being now initiated into the mysteries of bathing as conducted at Loèche-les-Bains, and having made the two ex-

cursions from the village, I entreat you to take the advice of one who speaks feelingly from experience of its dulness and monotony, and get away from the place as quickly as you can. A dismal omnibus with a Hansom cab skewered on in front, and called a diligence, starts every afternoon for the quaint old town of Sion, and is a pleasant drive for those who do not object to spending nearly five hours in going sixteen miles. There is an interesting footpath over the mountains, which saves four miles, so that a stout pedestrian leaving Loèche-les-Bains at the same time with the diligence, would arrive at Sion considerably before it. One of the most interesting objects connected with the drive is the gradual descent into a warmer climate, and more cultivated region. Leaving the bare sterile rocks and dark pine forests, one, by almost imperceptible degrees, reaches the fertile valley of the Rhone, with its vineyards, and orchards, presenting, in its whole scenery, a complete and delightful contrast to the barren basin in which Loèche-les-Bains is situated—the only unsightly object in the valley being the mighty river itself, which brings down with it a quantity of loose stones and débris, which litter in ugly patches what would otherwise be green pasturages.

By those tourists who care simply for beautiful scenery, Loèche-les-Bains may be avoided altogether, or the Baths of Pfeffers substituted—though there the bathing is carried on upon the 'separate' system; but to those who feel an interest in manners and customs as well as mountains and lakes; to those who would see the most curious pass in Switzerland (not the grandest or the most impressive); I confidently recommend a trip over the Gemmi to Loèche-les-Bains, at the same time that I advise all pleasure-seekers to limit their stay there to a single day, unless they have faith in the waters, and desire to simmer away ill-health, boil down incipient maladies, and pickle their constitutions.

WARNER STERNE.

JUNE PROMENADERS.

'How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away!'

SIGHING, whispering, shouting, thundering,
Leaping up the crashing scale,
Murmurs faint swelled out to peans—
Isis had withdrawn her veil!
Nature, late in bondage, tremulous
With a sweetly-selfish glee,
Rent the heavens with benediction—
Beauty once again was free!

Stately as a twin Apollo,
Easy with a victor's grace,
Marched the jewelled Spring, and triumph
Flushed the down upon his face.
Violets blushed, and kissed his sandals;
Perfumes smote him from the bowers;
Heaven lent ocean amiles of greeting;
Clouds wept parti-coloured showers.

Streaking, glimmering, gleaming, blazing,
Rushing up from deeps of night,
Strode the sun, as strides a giant,
To the 'upper deeps' of light.
Thronging cities praised his splendour;
Hill and vale essayed to sing;
Streams gave tongue through countless channels;
Music soared on every wing.

In the spring-time and the morning—
Youth of year and youth of day—
When near noon the moments halted,
When June caught the soul of May;
'Neath a roof of young-leaved arches—
Green o'erlaid with sunny gold—
Wrought I reverie-mosaics,
Fitting fancies new with old.

Then my dreamy eyes a vision
Saw in twofold grace to glide;
For a Brightness passed before me,
With a Virtue by its side.
And my heart in blessings bounded
To a happy voiceless tune:
'Sure,' it chanted, 'ye are sisters
Of the Morning and the June!

'Sisters of the prime of Nature
Or in action, or repose;
Sister-flowers that bloom to opening—
One a lily, one a rose!
One so stately, proudly happy,
Free and grand and debonair;
One so coy in sober gladness,
Dear to thought, to pity dear!

JUNE PHENOMENA



Drawn by M. A. Boyd.

JUNE PHENOMENA

THE JUNE PHENOMENA OF THE PLANETS AND MOONS, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS PHASES OF THE MOON, AND THE POSITION OF THE PLANETS IN THE ZODIAC, FOR THE YEAR 1880.

JUNE PROMENADERS.

'How happy could I be with either,
Were I other dear charmer away!'

SIGHING, whispering, shouting, thundering,
Leaping up the crashing scale,
Murmurs faint swelled out to psalms—
Tide had withdrawn her veil!
Nature, late in bondage, tremulous
With a sweetly-selfish glow,
Bent the heavens with benediction—
Beauty came again true free!

Stately as a twin Apollo,
Dressed with a victor's attire,
Marched the jewelled Spring, and triumph
Flashed the dawn upon his face.
Violets blushed, and kissed his sandals;
Perfumes smote him from the bowers;
Heaven bent even smiler on greeting;
Clouds wept from his eyes and showers.

Showering, glistening, glowing, flashing,
From his throne of light,
Shook the east, as strokes a giant,
To the 'upper deeps' of light.
Thronging cities poured his splendour;
Hill and vale resayed to sing;
Streams gave songs through countless channels;
Music soared on every wing.

In the spring-time and the morning—
Youth of year and youth of day—
When your noon the moments halted,
When June caught the soul of May;
Nestled a world of young-lashed arches—
Green overland with sunny gold—
Wrought I reverse-mosaics,
Fitting fancies new with old.

Then my dreamy eyes a vision
Saw in twofold grace to glaze;
Twas a brightness paled before me,
With a form by its side.
And my heart in beatings bounded
To a happy voiceless tune:
'Sure, it floated, 'ye are sisters
Of the Morning and the June!

'Masters of the prime of Nature
Or in action, or repose;
Sister-flowers that bloom to opening—
One a lily, one a rose!
One so stately, proudly happy,
Free and grand and debonaire;
One so coy in sober gladness,
Dear to thought, to pity dear!



Drawn by M. A. Boyd.]

JUNE PROMENADERS.

[See the Poem.

' Sisters of the June and Morning,
Of the Light on sea and shore—
Each is sister of the other!
How may worshipper say more?
As the sun towards the darkness
Ever bends his goalless race,
Be afar the clouds of sorrow
From each sweetly different face!

' So akin to grace and beauty,
Will ye not to love be kind?—
Though to choose were task too arduous
For the much-divided mind?
Why the knotty question settle,
If I here record an oath
In my heart of hearts to cherish
Love all-constant to you both?'

A. H. G.

LONDON SHADOWS.

No. II.—The Police Station Notice-Board.

THE publishing firm with which I deal for sensational literature is situated neither in the 'Row,' nor in Piccadilly, nor in the Strand. Its locality is anything but fashionable, being the bleak end of an eastern thoroughfare, and in a line with the parish vestry-hall and the parish doctor's shop, and the parish engine-house. Exteriorly, it is not so cosy a building as publishing houses as a rule are, but a gaunt edifice composed of the rawest-looking of red bricks, severely 'pointed,' with the narrowest lines of dead-white mortar, that looks like the braiding of an official uniform. What may be termed its shop windows are not enlivened by a display of gorgeously-bound volumes, with the title-pages temptingly revealed, but are reduced to opacity by an inner coating of grey paint; while without a rigid regiment of iron bars stand grimly sentinel; and its outer door, oaken, and studded with iron bolt-heads, looks decidedly the reverse of hospitable. In the centre of the door is a plain brass plate, inscribed with the name of the proprietor of the house, which is 'Police.'

My publisher wears a suit of dark-blue, adorned with leaden buttons,

and his feet are encased in square-toed bluchers, and about his neck he wears a leather collar. He is the cheapest publisher in London, which is one among many reasons why I patronize him. He pastes his stories on to a board about four feet long and three deep, which he brings outside with most praiseworthy punctuality every morning, and hangs to a hook in the wall between the door and the window; and you may go there and read them without it costing you a single farthing.

Being so liberal-minded a man, the reader will be pleased to learn that my publisher does a very extensive business. All the year round trade is never slack with him. Other sensational publishers are amenable to 'season.' They go muzzled, as it were, in the dog-days, which cannot be regarded but as a merciful dispensation of Providence. My publisher, however, is exempt from this salutary law. True, in the depth of winter, when the iron earth defies the labourer's spade, and the ice-merchant goes harvesting—when suicide is quoted in the horror market as 'brisk,' and the coroner and his twelve merry men are doing a roaring trade, my publisher is busier than usual, and the issues from his

press are more numerous; but his average business is as level as that of the cheesemonger on the opposite side of the street.

It is peculiar, however. Full-blown stories are not at all in my publisher's way. His plan is to give you no more than the mere bones—and rags—of his heroes and heroines, and leave you to fill in and pad and bolster as you please. This to lazy minds may appear an objectionable system, but, for my part, I prefer it. It isn't every one's cookery that suits my palate. I have a fancy for raw material in such cases; and at my favourite White-chapel house it may be obtained in any quantity, pure and unadulterated.

There is sufficient material to make the fortune of any intelligent novel-writer in the publications of one morning. Murder, burglary, misdemeanour, absconded husbands and faithless wives; trustworthy servants, with twenty years' character, anxiously inquired after by too confident masters; respectable tradesmen 'wanted' as criminal bankrupts. Love, hate, crime, ill-gotten wealth and ill-fated poverty, despair and suicide—all may be found on my publisher's board, set in a frame of four feet by three.

The bottom part of the board is devoted to the leading article of my publisher's trade, which is in 'Bodies Found.' Condensation is his especial study, and he will give you seven stories on as many half-sheets of ruled foolscap. Terribly brief! In ten lines a life's history may be clearly read by an intelligent person. Let the curious reader go to my publisher's board and try his skill. It is astonishing, when once you get the cue, how easy it is to build up your novel out of the slender materials he provides. He keeps in stock a regular 'form,' with the words 'When,' 'Where,' 'How dressed,' &c., &c., in print all down the one side of each half-sheet of foolscap; so that when he is in a humour to hit off a story, he has only to write down appropriate answers opposite the various question. Here is one, copied verbatim from my publisher's list for January:—

When . . .	Sunday, 6 a.m. December 25th.
Where . . .	Lincolns' Inn, River Thames.
Apparent age . . .	Twenty-three.
Hair and eyes, } colour of, }	Hair dark; eyes blue.
How dressed . . .	Old lavender silk dress, crinoline, one petticoat, spring-side boots, with military heels, much worn; bonnet, blue silk, black feather and roses.
Particular marks on person . . .	Left eye blackened as from a blow; scar on left ear as though one ear-ring had been pulled through the lobe.
Where lying . . .	Bone-house, Shadwell.

Here are your beans ready sprouted for stringing. Let Jenkins, the aspiring poet, who writes 'Lines on Amelia's Eyes,' and verses 'On my Lady's favourite Hound,' go to my publisher's board, and indulge his teeming fancy there!

Take the stark occupant of Shadwell bone-house: restore her to life: make the old lavender silk new: mend the torn left ear, and fill it and its fellow with a pair of twinkling pendants: renew the splendour of the blue silk bonnet: titivate the bruised and soddened features, and restore the boots with the military heels, and you have your heroine. Give her poor though honest parents, whom she has deserted, and a handsome West-end blackguard, to whose serpent tongue she has listened, and you may account for her six-months-long brilliant career. Have ready a neat gambling or forging scene, in which West-end B. is the chief actor, and a liberal quantity of startling revelation, remorse, tears, entreaty, abandonment, struggling poverty, temptation, swift descent from the West to the East end, evil company, recklessness, gin,—and you may return your heroine from whence she came—the Shadwell bone-house—with a serene consciousness of having done your duty by her.

It must be admitted, however, that it is not always so easy to deal with the raw material my publisher provides. Take the next case:—

Where found . . .	In the collar of an unfinished house at Fimlico.
Apparent age . . .	Thirty-five.
How dressed . . .	Of gentlemanly attire; pockets empty.
Particular marks on person . . .	None.

Here is a mystery worthy the consideration of the great 'sensation'

author. Who is this man of gentlemanly attire, and aged thirty-five (apparently)? How came he in the cellar? His pockets were empty. Did he, driven hard by destitution, deliberately slink into the unfinished house after the workmen had left it, and descend into the cellar to lie down and die? Altogether unlikely. A man so abased as to prefer dying in a cellar, while there were several spacious upper apartments at his disposal, would have seen nothing shocking in disposing of his gentlemanly waistcoat, which would have enabled him to struggle on yet a little longer. Empty pockets! Was it a case of robbery? Scarcely. When thieves commit murder it is by accident. There is an unexpected awakening of the victim, an uproar, a struggle, and a desperate blow. But the description says most distinctly, 'Particular marks on person. . . None.' A bruise would be accounted a particular mark—even a torn whisker or a scratched hand. Besides, a thief must be a rare dunce at his trade who would not appropriate the whole of the gentlemanly attire as well as the contents of the pockets thereof, and this as much in mitigation of the chances of the victim being recognized as on pecuniary grounds. No! it is not a case of robbery and accidental murder. Then it must be a love and suicide case. 'Apparent age, thirty-five,' my publisher says; but a face smitten by Death soon grows older, and so we may safely knock off five years.

Set him up in his gentlemanly boots, and set him breathing once again. Ah! now we recognize him! What! Algernon! Algernon Puffball, counter clerk at Rolin's Riches, and Co., the bankers, of Lombard Street! Why, how comes this? 'Hush! 'tis the night-watch! Stay until his measured tread has died away round the corner, and I will tell you all. List! She came; her golden hair dancing in the sunlight, and her beaming eye ethereal blue. No! no! it was not accident. 'Once it might have been so; nay, it is in the bounds of possibility that it might have happened

twice; but when for the *third time*, as she handed me the pass-book, her heavenly thumb touched mine—when, with drooping eyelids and a voice tremulous with emotion, she whispered, "Take this, if you please," could I longer doubt? My aged mother reasoned with me. She is a homely woman. "The eagle does not mate with the cuckoo," said she; "neither are cheese-parings a fit garnish for roast duck, my son." Embracing her, I laughed wildly, and flew from her presence. The number of my angel's house in Belgrave Square was no secret to me, and from morn till dewy eve I kept breathless vigil. At last she came! She came in a brougham, and seated by her side a titled villain, who fawned and smiled and smelt at the bouquet she held up for the purpose. The sight was maddening! I gnashed my teeth until a back one that is much decayed began to ache horribly. Thus goaded, I formed a desperate resolution. "Since it is hopeless to live for you," said I, shaking my fist after the brougham, "I at least may enjoy the sweet satisfaction of dying for you." So saying, and assuming a jaunty air, I entered a chemist's shop, and bought poison. My first idea was to make myself comfortable on her doorstep, and there take it; but it flashed to my mind that my rival, discovering my body, might gloat over it, which would be unpleasant. There was only one way to prevent it, and that was by destroying my identity. Instantly I acted on the brilliant conception. My watch and pocket-book I dropped down a sink-hole: for cleaning my boots I gave a shoe-black all the money in my possession, amounting to seven and elevenpence. You know the rest.

One more extract from the station-house notice-board. The individual to whom it refers is mentioned simply as 'Aged—found dead at a common lodging-house—particular marks on person: an anchor and two hearts tattooed on left arm, marks of bullet-wound on left shoulder, and scar, as of a cutlass-stroke, on right cheek.' Here at a glance we have a romance of love

and war. Seaport courtship fifty years ago—lovers' vows—anchor weighed—sea-fight—decks slippery with gore—hand-to-hand combat—wounds—heroic preservation of captain's life: 'If we weather this bout, come to me in the evening, Bob Marlinspike; you are a brave fellow!' (observation of Captain Mainbrace)—return to port—sweetheart fickle—Government ditto—sixpence a day—watercresses or Lucifer-matches—rheumatism—street begging—now lying at Lambeth Workhouse.

My publisher's list is very extensive; from 'murder,' to 'a lost bunch of keys,' each diurnal revolution of the world evolves material for his board. His press is continually throwing off broadsheets concerning every conceivable crime and disaster, here of felony, there of arson, riot, burglary, bigamy, unnatural fathers deserting their natural progeny, lost babies, lost dogs, lost purses, and stolen watches, *ad infinitum*. The fullest and most particular publication, however, to be found on my publisher's board, is that which is headed FORGERY. It always contains more information than any other in the list; and whereas, on ordinary occasions, my publisher seems to delight in brevity (he has probably heard that it is the soul of wit), his Forgery pages are most elaborately prepared. It is evident that a loving hand has lingered over the task, touching here a sentence, and there a word, until it assumed a satisfactory appearance before its charms were displayed to the gaze of a vulgar, inappreciative public. There has always seemed to me a mystery about this feature of my publisher's board, that grim *murder* itself standing by its side, fails altogether to neutralize. There is something terribly interesting in the word Forgery: whether it is in the long row of figures that usually follow beneath, or in the horribly minute description of the perpetrator, is hard to say. The forger may be hidden between walls twenty feet thick, far from all danger of capture; but here, on my publisher's board, he stands revealed to the

very finger-tips of his unworthy hand, 'nail of middle finger, right hand discoloured, as if from a pinch or blow,' says the description.

The forger may be hundreds of miles away, but his ugly shadow is thrown full on my publisher's board, pilloried as it were with murderers, burglars, and suicides. He is the only gentleman criminal—excepting the suicides—to be here met with; and to be at the same time a gentleman and a criminal, mind you, is something uncommon. There was once a divine who suffered death for forgery; and M.P.'s have ere now walked into my publisher's shop, almost soliciting a place in that gallery of distinguished characters which hangs on the hook outside. This is the reason, I opine, why the forger is treated with so much ceremony. The police use him as tenderly as his own valet; Detective Twig may put handcuffs on the forger's white wrist, but he does so with an apologetic air, and a respectful intimation that it is his unpleasant duty, &c. It appears to be a fixed principle of commercial morality that it is better to hang five innocent forgers, than let one guilty one escape. Better that the Royal Exchange become a dismal wilderness, than one forger of crisp bank notes roam at large within its sacred precincts. The bulls and the bears fall upon the unlucky wolf, and worry him into Newgate.

Once more we will refer to the board.

'Left his home, Elkanah Wilkins, aged forty-three, deserting his disconsolate wife and eleven unhappy children. Last seen in the vicinity of Liverpool, and supposed to meditate taking ship at that port for some distant colony. The unfortunate man suddenly left his home on the night of the 17th ult., with no apparent cause; hence it is feared his mind may be deranged. Whoever will give such information as shall lead to his discovery will be handsomely rewarded, and receive the grateful thanks of his distressed wife and family. Apply, 14, Bolton Crescent, E.C.'

A more affecting appeal than this

can scarcely be conceived, and a more heartless case of desertion has scarcely ever been recorded on my publisher's board. Suddenly leaving his happy home, his affectionate wife, and his eleven dear children—every one of whom are represented as bemoaning his disappearance—his unnatural behaviour is feelingly attributed to mental derangement, and a large reward is offered for his recovery. Some cynical readers at my publisher's shop will, I know, urge much in the wretch's behalf; they will attribute the misery of the family at its patriarch's disappearance to its sordid interest in the patriarch's goods and chattels. 'As for the sorrowing wife,' say they, 'she is advertising not for E. W., but for E. W.'s three per cents.' finally, they will justify, on philosophic principles, the action of a man who flies from eleven children to New South Wales or the Cape, or anything else equally monstrous and shocking. But we trust that before this the misguided Elkanah has returned to the loving amenities of 14, Bolton Crescent. Of the kind and forgiving spirit in which the erring man would be received by his disconsolate family, no one can doubt. His five sons and six daughters would be ready to receive him, and prove to him solemnly, but respectfully, the folly of his ways. There remain the congratulations of his spouse; and Elkanah would once more be happy in the bosom of his family, and even his bitterest enemy could not but murmur *Requiescat in pace!*

Besides the examples already given, my publisher has constantly on hand materials for stories, in which the highwayman, the rich heir or heiress, or the burglar, may figure as the leading character. He informs you, on a more capacious sheet than that on which he writes

on, 'Bodies found,' that whereas, on the night of Wednesday last, the dwelling-house of Crawley Mammonitch, Esq. was burglariously entered through the roof-trap, the lock of the iron safe picked, and therefrom stolen certain deeds and family papers, together with a little money, and a few articles of jewellery.

Here is work already cut out for the ingenious story-maker. He will immediately set the detectives on the right scent. They will bring him a long list of burglars known to the police, describe to him their age, dress, height, and general appearance, and inquire if he has seen such and such lurking about his premises. But he will laugh to scorn their shallow and commonplace suggestions, and whisper to their dull ears of a certain nephew of Crawley Mammonitch, a wild young man, and a villain to all the rest of the world, save the lovely Araminta Brimvillas, Crawley Mammonitch's ward, and residing under the old gentleman's roof. He will hint to the amazed detectives of foul play, of bonds and deeds concealed by old Mammonitch for the purpose of defrauding the lovely Araminta out of at least two-thirds of her vast estate. He will relate to the officers of the law a little episode of the said nephew's childhood; how that, whilst constructing a rabbit-hutch, the knife slipped and amputated the middle finger of his right hand. Then he will carry the detectives to the roof of old Mammonitch's house, and show them, in the slimy coating of the leads, the impression of a three-fingered hand. If he, the story-wright, on the strength of such material cannot get fairly aloft with his sensation story 'Trap and Counter-trap; or, the Ward's Inheritance,' it will be mere waste of time to potter about my publisher's shop any longer.

THE MERCHANT PRINCES OF ENGLAND.

(Continued from page 457.)

With Paterson philanthropy was quite as strong a motive as commercial gain, and perhaps it was the blending of these two generally discordant elements that led to the failure of his project; but, whether rightly or wrongly, his countrymen thought with him. The Scottish African and Indian—better known as the Darien—Company at once found favour with the people of Scotland. There is no good authority for the statement often made, that Paterson went north with his visionary friend, Fletcher of Saltoun, and, by a series of extravagant representations, worked upon the credulity of the ignorant. It rather appears that the first plan of a Scottish colonization of Darien began with others—with Sir Robert Christie, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and Lord Belhaven, in especial—and that at their instigation Paterson consented to give up to his own country the scheme he had wished to see adopted by some richer and more influential state. At that time Scotland was poor indeed; but it was rich in zeal on behalf of this scheme. No sooner was the subscription list opened than people of all classes and from all parts flocked up to Edinburgh to set down their names. Paterson, himself a subscriber for 3,000*l.*, was at the head of a committee in London; and in a few days from the first announcement, capital to the amount of 300,000*l.* was there collected. So soon as the project that he had vainly advocated for ten years was publicly taken up, it found abundance of supporters. Statesmen, merchants, and philanthropists alike were charmed at the thought of establishing a new colony upon the narrow strip of land connecting North and South America, so as to embrace the trade of both halves of the great continent, and afford a convenient meeting-place for the ships bringing merchandize both from Europe and from the distant settlements in India and the Asiatic islands. Vast re-

gions in America had been appropriated and found wonderfully profitable. Vast enterprises had been set on foot, with excellent result, for bringing within reach of civilized Europe the natural and developed wealth of the richest parts of Asia by means of long voyages round the southern coast of Africa. But till now, as Paterson urged, men had forgotten the real 'key to both the Indies,' a splendid place for commerce in itself as well as the portal to that direct traffic with the East which had hitherto been carried on in roundabout ways. 'The Isthmus of America,' he said, 'all things considered, is in healthfulness and fruitfulness inferior to few, if any, of the other places in the Indies, as naturally producing plenty of gold dust, dye woods, and other valuable growths, vast quantities and great variety of the best timber for shipping in the known world, and is capable of yielding sugar, tobacco, indigo, cocoa, vanilla, annatto, ginger, and such like, of the best and in great abundance. But besides, and above all, as being an isthmus, and seated between the two vast oceans of the universe, it is furnished on each side with excellent harbours, between the principal whereof lie the more easy and convenient passes between the one and the other sea. These ports and passes being possessed and fortified, may be easily secured and defended against any force, not only there but that can possibly be found in those places which are not only the most convenient doors and inlets into, but likewise the readiest and securest means, first, of gaining, and afterwards for ever keeping the command of, the spacious South Sea, which, as it is the greatest, so even, by what theory we already know, it is by far the richest side of the world. These ports, so settled with passes open, through them will flow at least two-thirds of what both Indies yield to Christendom, the sum whereof in gold, silver, copper, spices, saltpetre, pearls,

emeralds, stones of value, and such like, will hardly amount to less than 30,000*l.* sterling yearly. The time and expense of the voyage to China, Japan, and the richest part of the East Indies will be lessened more than a half, and the consumption of European commodities soon be more than doubled, and afterwards yearly increased.'

Whether Paterson's plans and hopes were trustworthy or not is open to question; but they took the world of English commerce by surprise, and were gladly endorsed by the multitude of merchants and adventurers whose capital and energies were not already employed in the old-fashioned channels of Eastern trade. To the East India Company and its rivals, the Turkey and Muscovy Companies, of course, the new project was altogether distasteful, and to their united opposition must mainly be attributed its disastrous ending. 'The gentlemen here,' wrote Paterson on the 9th of July, 1695, 'think that we ought to keep private and close for some months, that no occasion may be given to the Parliament of England to take notice of it in the ensuing session, which might be of ill consequence, especially as a great many considerable persons are already alarmed at it.' The caution was not unnecessary. During a very short time, as we have seen, the subscriptions in London alone to the Darien Company rose to 300,000*l.* The amount would doubtless soon have been very much greater but for the East India merchants and the 'great many considerable persons' who supported them. These opponents, however, were too much for Paterson. His plan was approved by King William himself, and endorsed by some of his foremost ministers and shrewdest advisers, with Lord Halifax and John Locke at their head; but it was energetically denounced in Parliament as wildly fanatical in itself, and certain to bring about war with Spain by its tampering with the Spanish monopoly of Central American trade; and those arguments had sufficient weight to lead to the impeachment of Paterson and his chief fellow-workers before the House of Com-

mons. The impeachment was never carried through; probably it was never meant to be more than a threat; but it served its purpose, by frightening the English capitalists and deterring Londoners from taking any important share in the enterprise.

Therefore it was confined to Scotland, and Scotland was too poor or too inexperienced for the singlehanded prosecution of so large an undertaking. Instead of the 300,000*l.* promised in London being added to, only a small portion of the amount was paid up, and months, not days, were needed for collecting as much in Scotland. A few large sums were tendered, Paterson's venture of 3000*l.* being backed by contributions to a like amount from the Duchess of Hamilton and the Duke of Queensberry, Lord Belhaven and Sir Robert Christie, the city of Edinburgh and the city of Glasgow. But most of the subscribers took shares of 100*l.* or so apiece; and in the Scotland of a hundred and seventy years ago there were not a great many men with even 100*l.* to spare. Not till the beginning of 1697 was an aggregate capital of 400,000*l.* subscribed, and even then there was some delay in prosecuting the schemes of the Company, owing to the difficulty of collecting stores and building ships at Edinburgh and Leith.

A very prudent man would not have embarked on the huge enterprise with so small a fund, and with the knowledge that when it was spent the revenues of Scotland would be pretty nearly exhausted. But Paterson, full of joy at the realization of his lifelong hopes, was naturally disposed to be somewhat imprudent. Therefore, from the handsome offices of the Company in Milne Square, Edinburgh, he boldly directed his operations, and made ready for the sailing of the first fleet in the spring of 1698, with himself as its commander, until an untoward circumstance robbed him of his supremacy and virtually ruined the whole affair. It seems that a sum of 25,000*l.* was set apart for the purchase of stores at Amsterdam and Hamburg, and thither Pa-

terson himself went to transact the business, having previously lodged the money in the hands of a London merchant named James Smith. By so doing he thought to save the Company 3,000*l.* or more, consequent on the variations of exchange between Edinburgh and London. But the result was far otherwise. Paterson was in Hamburg near the end of 1697, when he heard that one of his bills upon Smith was dishonoured, and further inquiry showed that a large portion of the money — upwards of 3,000*l.* — had been fraudulently made away with.

That was a terrible blow to Paterson. His subsequent conduct in the matter gives notable evidence of his chivalrous character, just as his treatment by the directors of the Company clearly proves their meanness and unfitness for the responsibilities devolving upon them. A common man would have said, 'I am very sorry, but I acted for the best, and am not chargeable with the defalcations of others.' But Paterson did otherwise. He practically took the whole blame upon himself. He represented that, 'by his engaging himself in the Company's service, leaving his own affairs abruptly, and thereby neglecting also other opportunities by which he might have advanced his fortune in England, he had lost more than the balance now due to the Company,' and was therefore unable at once to repay the whole amount. He was willing, however, to pay all he could, and for the rest, the directors were at liberty 'either to dismiss him out of the Company's service, allowing him time to recover some fortune or employment, and then, as he became able, he would pay by degrees; or to retain him in their service, and allow him some reasonable consideration out of the Company's first free profits, for his pains, charges, and losses in promoting the same, out of which allowance to be given him by the Company he doubted not in a few years to discharge the balance.' The latter plan was urged, amid much praise of Paterson's energy and honesty, by two gentlemen to whom the question had been re-

ferred, Mr. Robert Blackwood, merchant, of Edinburgh, and Mr. William Dunlop, principal of Glasgow College, who, according to a contemporary account, was 'distinguished by the rarely united excellencies of an eminent scholar, an accomplished antiquary, a shrewd merchant, a brave soldier, an able politician, a zealous divine, and an amiable man.' 'We are convinced,' added these referees, 'that Mr. Paterson's going along with the Company's expedition is, we will not say absolutely necessary, but may be very profitable and convenient, for these reasons: first, it is well known that for a considerable course of years he has applied himself to the knowledge of whatsoever doth principally relate to settlements, and certainly the advantage of his experience, reading, and converse must needs be very assisting to those whom the Company will think fit to intrust with the management of their affairs out of Europe. Secondly, Mr. Paterson having certainly a considerable reputation in several places of America, and wherever the Company will settle, the account of his being there will doubtless be a means to invite many persons from the neighbouring plantations who are possessed with an opinion of him.'

In that advice kindness and unkindness were mixed. The directors took the unkindness by itself, and aggravated it to the utmost. Paterson was deposed from his place as manager, and in the preparation of the expedition that quitted Leith in July 1698, he had no authoritative share; but he was sent with it in a subordinate capacity, the direction of the voyage and the plantation being intrusted to seven incompetent councillors, invested with equal powers. That mad arrangement was in keeping with all the other plans for the undertaking. Before the ships started Paterson represented that they were scantily supplied with bad provisions, and that the stores sent out for sale were not worth their freight. But he was overruled both then and all through the tragic history of the expedition. That history we need not

stop to repeat. It has been told times without number, most eloquently in the fictitious pages of Warburton and in the equally fictitious pages of Macaulay. There was bad management of every sort; Paterson's persistent efforts to correct abuses and prevent disasters being as persistently thwarted by the ignorant and arrogant men in authority. Twelve hundred men went out in the gladness and hopefulness of youth and unembittered manhood in the summer of 1698; a hundred and fifty miserable wretches returned in the early winter time of 1699, leaving the ruins of their settlement as a huge and ghastly tomb for the members of a second expedition, despatched in the previous August.

William Paterson was the greatest sufferer of all. He certainly did not go out, as Lord Macaulay represented, 'flushed with pride and hope.' Painful by reason of its monotony of sadness is his record of the voyage, in which nothing was done as he wished and had purposed. But on the other hand, though miserably ill during many months, and afflicted by the loss of his wife and her infant son—the first wife, the widow Bridges, having died many years before—it is an error to say that 'his heart was broken, his inventive faculties and plausible eloquence were no more, and he seemed to have sunk into second childhood.'

It was a second manhood into which the noble merchant-patriot—at that time only two-and-forty—entered with the beginning of the year 1700. 'Thanks be to God,' he wrote to one of his friends of the second Darien expedition, 'I am wonderfully recovered, only a great cold and feverish humour oppress me at present, but I hope it will soon be over.' Finding that he only had been thoroughly honest and devoted to their interests, the directors of the Company began to repent of their long ill-treatment. 'They are exceeding hearty and sensible, and do seem to make amends for any former neglect or defect. I comfort myself, hoping that at last the Almighty will make us glad according to the days wherein He has afflicted us; and in all my troubles

it is no small satisfaction to have lived to give the Company and the world unquestionable proof that I have not had any sinister nor selfish designs in promoting this work, and that unfeigned integrity has been the bottom of it. How and what I have suffered in the prosecution thereof God only knows, and may the Almighty lay it no further to their charge who have been the cause! I have always prayed for this, but must needs confess I could never, since my unkind usage, find the freedom of spirit I do now.' That freedom of spirit he used, as long as there was any hope, in striving to correct the errors of the first Darien exploits and lead to a successful colonization. Therein he failed, and Scotland suffered heavily from the loss of men and capital, although by no means so heavily as contemporary and subsequent critics have represented. Nothing but honour, however, is due to Paterson. If he erred at first, he erred because of his enthusiastic generosity and philanthropic zeal, too great to take a fair account of the difficulties in his way. If now he failed, he failed because others were not as disinterested and untiring as himself. But though his views were not adopted, honest men of all parties joined in showing respect to his superior honesty. The Scots, who thought themselves ruined by the failure of the Darien Company, honoured him as their benefactor. The English, who denounced the Company as a wanton piece of folly, joined praise of him with abuse of his associates. The paid hirelings of the court, it is true, raked up old stories, and twisted them into new libels; but by King William and his ministers he was held in hearty esteem. In singular proof of this we find a letter from the Duke of Queensberry, the Royal Commissioner in Scotland, written on the 31st of August, 1700, showing that William had ordered some money to be sent to him in relief of the poverty to which his labour had brought him. 'The poor man acts,' he says, 'with great diligence and affection towards the king and country. He has no bye-end, and loves

this government both in church and state. He knows nothing yet of my having obtained anything for him; and I am a little embarrassed how to give him what I am allowed for him, lest his party in that Company should conceive an unjust jealousy of him, or he himself think that I intend as a bribe that which is really an act of charity.

Just three weeks later the Duke of Queensberry wrote again to London, saying that 'Mr. Paterson, the first person that brought the people of Scotland into the project of Caledonia, was writing such things as it was hoped might create some temper of moderation among them.' This was a volume of 'Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade,' published in 1701, for a long time by everybody, and even now-a-days by some,* attributed to John Law, but clearly proved by Mr. Saxe Bannister to have been written by Paterson. In this work the merchant set himself in excellent spirit to suggest plans for repairing the mischief which his Darien scheme had done to Scotland, and to propound much else full of patriotism and good sense. The establishment of a sort of merchants' parliament, with vast legislative and executive powers on all commercial matters, was not very wise or feasible; but the general purport of the tract was admirable. In Paterson's judgment Scotland needed intellectual and moral, as well as commercial advancement. The political troubles of the country during the disastrous hundred years following on the accession of James I. had not been beneficial to it. 'Although a great and capable genius be a kind of metal that can never be so well-tempered as by and in the furnace of affliction, yet the meaner and more abject sort of spirits, instead of being better or further improved, are rather the more depressed and crushed thereby. Instead of growing more wise, prudent, patient, constant, careful, diligent, meek, and easy in themselves and with others, they become more hard-

ened, presumptuous, conceited, rash, unthinking, and uneasy, or otherwise more mean, abject, heartless, and stupid.' But wretched, indeed, was the country in which this state of things lasted for ever; and it was with the view of helping his own nation out of so great a mischance that Paterson wrote, in the hope, as he said, 'that the many and various exercises we have lately met with will have the better and not the contrary effect, and prove only necessary preparatives, the better to fit the people of this kingdom for some glorious success to come; that after a lethargy of near an age they will now be effectually roused up, and that their sense and genius in matters of trade shall be capable of mounting somewhat higher than the aping a few of the worst, meanest, and most pernicious shifts and mistakes of some of our most trading neighbours; that contrariwise our hearts will be enlarged in proportion to the weight and consequence of what we have in hand, and the favourable occasions that offer at home and abroad; and that by the means thereof we may have the glory as well as the comfort of taking more care of the next generation than the last has done of us, and of putting our country in the way of regaining in the next century what it has lost in this.' The details of Paterson's proposals are too elaborate to be here set forth. Their general character, and the nature especially of their impracticable parts, may be gathered from a satirical letter written at the time to William III.'s confidential secretary: 'The design,' we are there told, 'is a national trade, so that by it all Scotland will become one entire company of merchants. It proposes a fund of credit by which in two years to raise above 300,000*l.* sterling. With this stock they are, first, to trade to both the Indies and to the colonies, on the terms of the Act establishing their Company; second, to raise manufactories throughout the kingdom; third, to pursue their fishery to greater profit in all the markets of Europe than any other fishing company in Christendom can do; fourth, to em-

* Especially by Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, in his recent novel, 'John Law of Lauriston.'

ploy all the poor in the nation, so that in two years there shall not be one beggar seen in all the kingdom, and that without any act of slavery; fifth, to pay back to any subscribers to the African stock his money, if demanded, so that nobody can complain of any loss that way.'

Paterson never forgot his Darien project. He was faithful to all his old plans for the benefiting of mankind. Some of them, especially the plan of the Bank of England, had had wonderfully good effect; but the financial and political troubles amid which William's reign was ended, disheartened him as well as all other earnest men. 'In the last months of the life of this great but then uneasy prince,' he wrote, in a very valuable letter, showing, as it does, how influential was his position even in this time of poverty and apparent disgrace, 'I had access to him, when, finding him in much perplexity and concern about the state of his affairs, I took opportunity to represent to him that his misfortunes did not so much proceed from the variable tempers or humours of his people, as some pretended, but rather from the men of his house, or those he had trusted with his business, who, either for want of capacity or experience, or that they preferred themselves to him, had brought the affairs of the kingdom into such confusion as made his subjects uneasy; and now at last, instead of removing the causes of complaint, they had presumed to employ his treasure and authority to silence the complainers;—that, as matters stood, there were no reins of government, no inspection, no inquiry into men's conduct; every man did as he pleased, for nobody was punished, nor indeed rewarded according to merit; and thus his revenue was sunk, and his affairs in the utmost confusion. He owned this, but asked for remedies. Upon which I proposed that, in the first place, he should put the management of the revenues on the right footing, without which all other remedies would prove ineffectual. The first step towards reforming his revenue was that of restoring the public credit, by making

provision of interest for all the national debts, and by taking care for the time to come such should be granted as to prevent further deficiency. The course of the Treasury and Exchequer should be so regulated, both in receipts and payments, as to render them easy to be understood, and so certain and prudent as to leave no room for fraud or ill practices in time to come. In order to this, I proposed that a method of inquiry and inspection from time to time into the behaviour of all men concerned in the revenue be laid down and nicely executed. Thus I showed him that he would quickly get out of debt, and at least a fourth part of the revenues would be saved hereafter. The next thing I proposed to him was the seizing upon the principal posts in the West Indies;—a modification of the old Darien scheme, about which enough has already been said and quoted. 'The third thing I proposed was an union with Scotland, than which I convinced him nothing could tend more to his glory, and to render this island great and considerable. The fourth thing I proposed,—and which I told him was to be done first, in order to the restoring his authority, and showing to the world that for the time to come he would no more suffer such a loose and unaccountable administration as his being a stranger to men and things here had forced him to wink at hitherto—was a present commission of inquiry, by which he would see how and by whom his affairs had been mismanaged, and who they were who, under pretence of mending matters, perplexed and made them still worse, and in particular would be at a point how far the present debts did arise from mismanagement or from the deficiencies of the funds. I spoke much to him of the nature of this commission, with which, and the other proposals, he seemed extremely satisfied, as is evident by his last and memorable speech, in which he earnestly recommends the retrieving of the public credit, and offers his concurrence to all such inquiries as should be found necessary; and it

is plain, by the seventh article of the Grand Alliance, and his messages to the two Houses of Parliament, how much he laid to heart both the affair of the West Indies and that of the Union.'

Of this very noteworthy letter—interesting both as an important link in the man's own biography, and as a contribution to the general history of the country—the most noteworthy part is that referring to the union of England and Scotland. To this great end Paterson's mind had been steadily advancing since the disastrous close of his Darien expedition. He saw in it the best, perhaps the only, means of breaking down the jealousies of the two nations, and of making possible their full development, commercial, political, and moral. And though contemporary writers did scant justice to the merchant, and modern historians have altogether forgotten him, facts show that no other single man contributed as largely to this glorious result as William Paterson, the visionary and the pauper.

For some years from this time Paterson was in and out of London, living chiefly at a house in Queen Square, Westminster, writing many tracts on miscellaneous subjects of importance, and planning the formation of a valuable library of trade and finance for the use of merchants and all concerned in the commercial welfare of the island, but working chiefly on behalf of the Union. Almost the last thoughts of King William were on behalf of this noble business; and it was one of the few matters in which Queen Anne's ministers were willing to follow the lead of their predecessors. Paterson was throughout the guiding genius. A proper account of his work, however, cannot possibly be given here. It would involve a re-telling of a large portion of English and Scottish history during the early years of Anne's reign. All through those years we see Paterson in busy conference with the leading statesmen of both countries. On one day he is writing a quire of notes for Secretary Godolphin's consideration; on another he is explaining and adding to them in

person. At one time he is arguing down the prejudices of Englishmen; at another he is showing Scotchmen how groundless are their fears. During these years he was generally to be found in London; but often, especially in the autumn of 1706, he was in Edinburgh as Commissioner from the English Government. It was in September and October, 1706, that he wrote five letters, or treatises, which, according to an impartial contemporary, 'cleared the understanding of some dubious, though well-meaning people, who were deluded, misinformed, and carried away by the surmises of scribblers making it their business to perplex, and, if possible, cause the Union to shipwreck in the very harbour where, in all appearance, it ought to have been protected; and bore such weight with the committees appointed to examine the several matters referred to them, that we may, without flattery, say they were the compass the committees steered by.' 'Not any sort of league, confederacy, limitation, agreement, or bargain, or, indeed, anything less or below a complete Union,' said Paterson himself in a longer work on the subject, published in this same year, (1706), 'can introduce the good which may be justly expected therefrom, or effectually deliver these nations from the mischiefs and inconveniences they labour under and are exposed unto for want thereof. Nothing less than a complete Union can effectually secure the religion, laws, liberties, trade, and, in a word, the peace and happiness of this island. And since, by the blessing of God, a happy occasion now offers for completing this great and good work, not in humour or in rage, but in cool blood, with reason and understanding, it is hoped that, after all the troubles, hazards, and distresses of these nations for want thereof, an Union shall in their temper and disposition be concluded, to the glory and renown of our excellent queen, common benefit and general satisfaction of all her subjects, who, as having but one interest and inclination, may for ever after be of one heart and one affection.'

Not altogether to the glory and renown of excellent Queen Anne, or to the common benefit and general satisfaction of her subjects; yet, as soon as national jealousies had been overcome, to the immense advantage of both nations, the Union was agreed upon, and the separate States of England and Scotland were merged into the kingdom of Great Britain on the 1st of May, 1707. The last act of the Scottish independent Parliament, dissolved on the 25th of March, was to declare that William Paterson, Esquire, deserved a great reward for his efforts in promoting the Union, and formally, on that account, to recommend him to her Majesty's favour. Noteworthy evidence of the merchant's influence, and of the esteem in which he was held by all parties, is in the fact that by the Dumfries boroughs, so full of unreasonable discontent at this very Union that they almost became the scene of civil war, he was elected their representative in the first United Parliament. But there was blundering in the election, and Paterson seems to have never sat in the House of Commons.

About his movements during the ensuing years we have no very precise information. That he was busy, as he had been through all the earlier years of his life, devising plans for the benefiting of society, is sufficiently shown in the numerous writings to which we have not space to do any sort of justice. While he was working on behalf of the Union, he found time for the preparation of numerous tracts, sensible and manly to a remarkable degree, on the National Debt, and on systems of auditing public accounts, on free trade and taxation, and the like; and when his political duties were over he had leisure for closer attention to the financial and commercial topics that were his special study. At a time when the National Debt was a new thing it was no idle undertaking to attempt its redemption, and to preach the duty of compelling each year and each enterprise to pay its own costs, without fastening a burden on posterity. This was one of Paterson's

chief employments during the later years of his life, and it was no small disappointment to him to find that the foolishness and wrong-doing of Queen Anne's ministers, and the recklessness of the more important leaders of the English people, subverted the objects he had at heart. 'Upon the whole,' he said, in the memorial addressed to Secretary Godolphin on his interviews with William III., from which we have already quoted, 'instead of the valuable securities and advantages we might have justly expected from a sincere and vigorous prosecution of these wise and solid measures of the king, we have seen the then national debts of fifteen or sixteen millions, so far from being diminished, that they are near, if not quite, doubled; the public revenues almost wholly sold and alienated, and yet about one-third of new debts still, without funds for paying them; heavy bills and other such deficient credit at twenty or twenty-five per cent. discount, and in danger of falling still lower, with all the other parts of the public credit in proportion,—disorders which must still increase, if any considerable part of future supplies should be raised by anticipations on remote and doubtful funds; our home industry and improvements under insupportable difficulties; most of the branches of our foreign trade so overcharged as to amount to a prohibition, not only our reasonable designs to the West Indies, but even navigation itself, and our proper plantations and acquisitions abroad abandoned or neglected, our enemies suffered to carry away many millions which might have been ours; and the true spirit of the Union, with the great advantages that would otherwise have naturally followed upon it, stifled and suppressed.' 'At the Revolution,' he said again, 'it was expected that these disorders would have been effectually redressed, but instead of this the confusions of the revenues have grown greater than in any time before, nay, to such a degree that the throne hath been thereby shaken, the public credit hath been violated, the coin adulterated, high

premiums and interests allowed, scandalous discounts made necessary, navigation, with foreign and domestic improvements, discountenanced or abandoned, frauds and corrupt practices in the trade and revenues rather countenanced than discouraged, and those few who endeavoured or performed anything towards the amendment or reforming these or such-like disorders oppressed or neglected.'

Oppression and neglect, without doubt, were the lot of William Paterson. Sorely troubled at the failure of his hopes for the general welfare and financial dignity of Great Britain, he had cause enough for trouble on his own account. Impoverished long ago by the fraud of his agent in the Darien enterprise, which, with an honourable feeling rare indeed among the men of his time, he resolved to consider as a debt of his own, and deeply chagrined at the disastrous issue of the whole enterprise, he continued a poor man till very near the end of his life. The pressure of business, which he felt called upon to undertake on behalf of his country and the public welfare, prevented him from resuming the mercantile pursuits by which he might easily have enriched himself; and the queen and state whom he served with all his powers gave him no recompense. At the time of the Darien failure, the Scottish Parliament had promised him indemnity for his losses therein; and in 1707 it was enacted that 'in regard that, since his first contracts, the said William Paterson hath been at further expenses, and sustained further losses and damages, the Court of Exchequer of Scotland should take account thereof, and likewise of his good services and public cares, and make a full and fair report thereof to her Majesty.' But nothing was done. 'The dependence I have had upon the public,' Paterson said, in a plaintive letter to Secretary Godolphin, dated the 4th of April, 1709, 'for a settlement in its service, or in some way or other to have a recompense for what I have done for near seven years of her Majesty's reign, besides

former losses, hath at last so reduced me and my family, that without a speedy provision and support from her Majesty, I must unavoidably perish.' Therefore he asked the secretary to lay before the queen a petition detailing his various services under the State, and their influence on the affairs of the country:—'by which so long-continued troubles and expensive proceedings,' he urged, 'your petitioner is rendered unable to subsist, or to extricate himself from the debts and difficulties wherein he is thereby involved, without your Majesty's special care and protection.' Still nothing was done. 'There are two reasons why men of merit go unrewarded,' said a contemporary historian, writing in 1711. 'Bustodies have more impudence, and get by importunity what others deserve by real services; and those at the helm are often obliged to bestow employment on their supporters without any regard to merit.' Therefore Paterson, without influence among the place-givers, and too true a patriot to desist from the good work because of his employers' ingratitude, was forgotten; and many besides the writer just cited had to complain that 'this great politician, the chief projector of the Bank of England, the main support of the Government, very instrumental in bringing about the Union, and the person chiefly employed in settling the national accounts, should be so disregarded that the sums due to him were not paid.' He lived as cheaply as he could, doing his utmost to keep himself in honourable independence. We are told, among other things, of an advertisement in one of the old journals inviting pupils to his classes in mathematics and navigation. But he could not keep himself out of debt. Paul Daranda, the great merchant, his former associate in the establishment of the Bank of England and other good works, received in 1719 1,000*l.* in payment for the help given to him in the support of his stepchildren—children of his own Paterson seems not to have had, with the exception of the infant who died at Darien—and other debts

were faithfully repaid by him as soon as he was able.

That, however, was but a little while before his death. 'A memorial of Mr. Paterson,' a document of great interest, both personal and public, addressed to George I. soon after his accession, tells how, 'with much pain and expense, he hath already made considerable progress towards a proper return or representation of some public affairs of the greatest consequence, particularly of the taxes, impositions, and revenues of Great Britain, with the anticipations and debts charged and contracted therein during the last twenty-six years, amounting to about fifty millions sterling. This volume is to demonstrate in what cases these impositions may be rendered more easy to the subject, yet the revenues greatly improved, whereby, of course, this immense debt will be sooner and more easily discharged. But the great expense he had been at in the last twenty-three years in things relating to the public service, and the non-payment of a considerable sum of the equivalent-money, detained from him for several years by a violent party, disables him at present from completing this design. Former neglects of these and like things, make it no easy matter soon to put them in any tolerable light. However, 500*l.* or 600*l.* present supply, would enable him to go forward with this great work till further provision be found proper.' That modest request for 500*l.* or 600*l.* was promptly answered by a parliamentary vote, passed in July, 1715, assigning him 18,000*l.* as indemnity for the many and heavy expenses he had been put to in the service of the State.

The gift, if gift it may be called, was well-timed. It enabled Paterson to pay all his debts, reckoned to have amounted to something like 10,000*l.*, and it encouraged him to the writing of his last and most valuable work, 'An Inquiry into the State of the Union of Great Britain, and the Past and Present State of the Trade and Public Revenues thereof,' published in 1717. It contained suggestions for the reduction of the National Debt, which George's

statesmen were not wise enough to adopt, and which so offended 'the meaner sort of dealers in the public funds,' the dishonest stockjobbers of those days, that they burnt it in front of the Royal Exchange. But it also contained other suggestions, about exchequer bills and public credit, excise duties and taxes, which were made the basis of many important financial changes, and the means of saving vast sums of public money, besides contributing greatly to the national honour.

But those reforms were seriously checked; and Paterson's last days were painfully embittered by the strange favour accorded by the world to his famous kinsman's pernicious teachings. Cruellest of all the slanders with which the fair fame of Paterson has been sullied is that which connects him with the schemes of John Law of Lauriston, his junior by thirteen years. Between the two men there was some sort of cousinship; and Law, the goldsmith's son, of Edinburgh, doubtless spoke the truth when he told Montesquieu that he traced his skill in the jugglery of figures to the lessons taught him by Paterson's Bank of England, in 1693; but we have no evidence of intercourse between them, while there is abundant proof that Paterson was the foremost opponent of Law's visionary and dishonest projects. In 1705, when Law made his first experiment in the financial speculations that reached perfection in the Mississippi scheme, by addressing to the people of Edinburgh 'two overtures for supplying the present scarcity of coin and improving trade, and for clearing the debts due by the government to the army and civil list by issuing paper money,' Paterson issued two able pamphlets showing the mischief of that and all other 'imaginary projects,' and maintaining that there would be no national credit without solid cash, and no national progress without persevering industry. These maxims he adhered to all through his life. It is true that he looked with favour upon the South Sea Company before it was converted into the South Sea Bubble;

and, having no funds of his own, agreed to his friend Daranda's investing 4,000*l.* in it; but he heartily disapproved of John Law's reckless conduct in France, and of the infatuated liking with which in later years he came to be regarded in England.

But the consummation of that saddest and maddest of all financial follies William Paterson did not live to see. On the 3rd of July, 1718, 'at the Ship tavern, without Temple Bar, about four in the afternoon,' he made his will, therein providing that all his debts should be paid, and the residue of his property, about 6,400*l.*, be divided among his stepchildren, his nephews and nieces, and his 'good friend Mr. Paul Daranda.' He died at the age of sixty-one, in the following January, 1719. In the foregoing paragraphs our limits of space have not allowed us to say half of what ought to be said in illustration of his great talents and greater honesty, his untiring patriotism and persistent devotion to everybody's welfare but his own; and we have not been able

to say anything at all of the good influence that his commercial and financial teachings had upon the future trade of England; but enough has been done to justify the praise given to him by his friend Daniel Defoe, as 'a worthy and noble patriot of his country, one of the most eminent in it, and to whom we owe more than ever he'd tell us, or I am afraid we'll ever be sensible of, whatever fools, madmen, or Jacobites may asperse him with.'*

H. R. F. B.

* For his courteous permission to make free use of his edition of 'The Writings of William Paterson, Founder of the Bank of England' (three volumes, second edition, 1859), we are much indebted to Mr. Saxe Bannister. Besides the careful editing of all Paterson's works now known to us, Mr. Bannister has, in his prefaces, his biographical introduction, and his appendices, brought together nearly all the available materials for Paterson's biography,—both those which his own patient research has discovered in the State Paper Office, the British Museum, and other manuscript libraries, and those contained in the 'Darien Papers' of the Bannatyne Club, and other publications.



ON THE ROAD TO DINNER.

(ILLUSTRATED BY ADELAIDE CLAXTON.)

'THE tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell!' Dinner-bell indeed! Thank goodness that relic of the dark ages, that knew not Ude, Soyer, and Francatelli has almost entirely disappeared from the metropolis, and its sound is now only heard in country-houses, manufactories, and such like large establishments, where, indeed, its services are eminently useful. Even in country-houses we have a somewhat theatrical bias towards a gong, and could write a sensational stage direction to this effect:—

Scene, the Dining-room. Time, Evening. Attendants discovered preparing Banquet. Gong sounds. Attendants retire mysteriously. Gong sounds again. Enter Guests.

It's an unco' awfu' summons that gong. On the stage it would be taken as an intimation of the appearance of a demon, a fairy, or (in Muster Richardson's show) a ghost; and in a large country-house its sound will bring all the fairies of the family tripping downstairs to the ethereal enjoyment of dinner.

Will it be considered as savouring of the most gross epicurean doctrine, to say that dinner, as the principal form of feeding, is the object of life? This expression of opinion will be received with a solemn unpleasant silence. These words, if uttered loudly, nay defiantly, by way of a challenge to the general company, will fall like a hot coal, popping itself out of the grate on to the drawing-room hearth-rug. Come, my friends, I am only joking; speaking for the sake of saying something as smart as possible during that intermediate state of mistiness and uncertainty that lies between the arrival of the Guests, and the hour appointed for dinner. Of this quarter, half, or three-quarters of an hour, more anon: let me clear myself of this seeming epicureanism, falsely so called. For what does the modern man of much leisure live, if not for dinner? Certainly not for break-

fast: for allowing him to take that meal as late, say, as twelve or one o'clock, it is evident that he hasn't lived his day out by that time. Neither is his end and aim centred in luncheon; if, that is to say, he even admits the word into his vocabulary. At what meal is it that he meets his friends with their various items of general and personal news of the day? To what meal of yesterday does he refer in his conversation at the club to-morrow? Dinner. Dinner ends the modern day. I say the modern day, because our forefathers closed theirs with supper, taking it at about the same hour that finds us at the dinner-table. As to the ancients, who knew not gas, and were economical in the matter of candles, they dined at 11 o'clock A.M., and, absurd as it may seem, liked it. But then these old Romans turned themselves out, or were turned out of bed by their slaves, as soon as there was sufficient daylight for shaving purposes. For what does the man of business live? Why does he work? To support himself. Precisely. And he supports himself by food? Exactly. And the main portion of this support is taken at what meal, sir? At dinner. Thank you. Then, sir (it's always well to throw in 'sir' when you're going to state a clincher)—then, sir, the man of business works that he may dine. He works that he may live; he dines that he may live; he works that he may dine. If he has a family, his labour is significantly stated to be for his children's 'bread.' But here there is a chance of such a theme as shall force the writer into a pathetic strain. That won't do: there must be no red eyes, or moist probosces, at dinner-time. So let us laugh and sing; capital thing for the appetite, by the way, is singing. With many, besides being a cause, it is a sure sign of hunger. Young Hummer, in whose society it has often been my lot to drive in a cab to dine

with a mutual friend (I own to being somewhat nervous about writing that word 'mutual;' but whether used rightly or wrongly, I know what I mean by it in this place, as also, I fancy, will the friendly and lazy reader);—well, during our journey, Hummer eschews conversation, and treats me to reminiscences of popular operas: whereby I know that Hummer is hungry. If Hummer is not hungry, he talks. I have vainly tried to get Hummer out of this habit, by starting some topic which is interesting to Hummer. Thus, after the usual greetings consequent upon Hummer's getting into the cab, when I 'pick him up,' or my getting into the cab when he picks me up, as the case may be, there is a silence, and the cab rattles onward. Presently Hummer begins the march from Norma, 'Tum ti dum, lum ti dum, lum ti dumti' (dumti being very high and slightly out of tune, he finds it convenient to change the key, and proceeds with the next few bars in a bass voice, like somebody else singing), 'lumti doodle deedle doodle lumti dumti;' the next part he whistles, accompanying himself on the leather strap that pulls up the cab window. Much as I admire Bellini, yet the work of the great master rendered by Hummer, through the somewhat unmeaning and decidedly monotonous medium of 'doodle deedle, doodle deedle, lum ti dum ti,' loses much, if not all, of its native charm and original freshness. There is a pause, and I begin to congratulate myself on the probability of Hummer not knowing another tune, and of having had enough of Norma by this time. This is, unfortunately, rather premature.

HUMMER (begins in the middle of the favourite tenor air in Marta, delivering the same in a sort of semi-whistle).

MYSELF (trying to interest him).—'Oh! have you heard from Charles (his brother) lately?'

HUMMER (shakes his head, by way of answer, but doesn't stop whistling).

MYSELF (finding that the first method is a failure, attempting something that requires some other answer

than simply 'Yes,' or 'No').—'What did you think of Gladstone's speech last night, eh?'

HUMMER (stopping his whistling, and shaking his head).—'Ah!' (Shuts his lips and hums the Guards' Waltz, as if in deep thought.)

MYSELF (in desperation).—'What do you say to that queer turf case, the other day, eh?'

HUMMER (shrugging his shoulders, and singing the Old Men's Chorus in Faust).—'Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pöp-ä-pop fol lol de riddle liddle li-e-ey- (shakes) do.' (Finishes.)

MYSELF.—'Well, but do you—'

HUMMER (encores himself).—'Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pöp-ä-pop, fol lol de riddle, riddle li-i-i-ey- (shakes) do.' (Finishes, and smiles at me.)

MYSELF (determining to give him a taste of the nuisance, vaguely, no tune in particular).—'Tooral looral, looral laral, lum di looral (this in a high key), ri fol looral (interrupted by a cough: then as a baritone) looral doodle um doo.'

HUMMER (starting with words).—'Beautiful star-ar! Beautiful star-ar!' &c.; then encores a duet, which should be written operatically thus:—

HUMMER (steadily).—'Beau-tiful star-ar! Beautiful,' &c.

MYSELF (unsteadily).—'A life on the ocean-wave, and a (joining in, involuntarily) Beautiful star-ar—'

HUMMER (looking out of one window).—'Beautiful star-ar! (keeping steadily to the tune) Beautiful star-ar! Star of the e-vening! Beautiful,' &c.

MYSELF (looking out of the other window, trying the only tune I know, A life on the Ocean Wave).—'A toodley um ti dave—a tweedley um ti boo—a boo—(finding myself gliding into Beautiful Star-ar, I try back in another key, with words) A life on the ocean wave,' &c.

HUMMER (triumphantly).—'Beautiful star-ar!' &c.

Ensemble, { MYSELF (vaguely).—

'Beautiful star-ar!' &c., and here, owning myself defeated, I give in to Hummer. He stops once in the course of the drive to observe that he is very hungry.

'I knew that,' I growl.

'Why?' he asks.

'Because,' I growl again, 'you

always kick up a row—what you call singing—when you want your dinner.

Hang the fellow! Hummer only laughs, and off he is again chirruping with the perseverance of a throistle. Have you ever heard the animals at the Zoological Gardens, just before feeding-time?—Hummer equals any two of them, before his dinner-hour. At last we arrive at Lady Plateglass's mansion. The occasion is a grand dinner-party: little Hummer is asked, because Hummer is at this moment private secretary to my Lord Partiton, and, moreover, Hummer, let me tell you, is very well connected. If you ask me of his connections, I cannot say anything: no one of whom I've ever inquired, ever could; but there is a sort of tradition floating about society generally that little Hummer is 'doosed well connected, you know.' Why my Lady Plateglass asks me is a question between that fascinating aristocrat and myself, that neither is, nor can be, any business of yours. I do not often go. I am glad of that. I should become what Mr. Mantalini called 'a body' if I did; and I do not want—that is, at present—to go out of this beautiful world, merely because I take a pleasure in seeing my name at the bottom of the lists of the beau monde that dined at Lady Plateglass's the other evening. Oh! the dulness! oh! the stiffneckedness of these state dinner-parties! I ask you to look at those people coming downstairs, at the portrait of my Lord Plateglass. You'll only see his back as he vanishes into the dining-room, but that's enough, leading the way with the principal guest on his arm, and my lady, with that single curl cork-screwing itself over her right shoulder, leaning on the arm of a most distinguished exile, who looks about as cheerful as an undertaker at a wedding. As to the next resplendent couple who have returned from some Olympian reception profusely decorated, as you now see them, I am glad that my lot will not be cast between *them* at the dinner-table. There's Hummer on the stairs with an eyeglass; depend upon it that, oblivious of his partner, he

is rum-ti-toodleyumming from 'Norma' or 'Puritani,' as he sniffs the dinner afar off. Shall I point out the present writer to you? The artist has saved me the trouble by beheading me with the armorial bearings of three champagne glasses and a couple of bottles in the left-hand corner of the picture. But if I am thus hidden from view, so also is the graceful limner herself, whom on his arm it is the great pleasure of this present scribbler to be handing down to dinner. 'The Spanish fleet you cannot see,' says the Governor in the 'Critic,' 'because—it is not yet in sight.' Behind the decorated Duchess of Kiljoye (nothing less I assure you) comes Lady Venetia Winsom, the Marquis of Pledgitt's charming daughter. Charming! yes, that's the word, for she is an enchantress, a fascinatrix. She's just twenty-one, and the wickedest little thing that ever ruined a man's peace of mind. The exact number of hearts that she broke in her first season I have no means of ascertaining; but it was known everywhere that it was through her Charley Fortescue was on the point of shooting himself, and, changing his mind, went to shoot something or other in Abyssinia. Wasn't it through her that Jack Straw, of Straw's Castle, who hasn't got a penny, ran into all sorts of extravagances, and has been obliged to expatriate himself? Finally, to omit all mention of others, didn't this little sly puss ('sly puss' is a mild term for my young lady, by the way, considering the mischief she did) give Fred Green (the banker's son) to understand that she loved him and only him; and wasn't the fashionable world awoke out of its sleep rather early one morning, to hear that Lady Venetia had eloped with Lord Tiptop? Green was mightily cut up; it was only the day before, that he had presented her with a magnificent diamond bracelet. Green could have bought Tiptop even at his (Tiptop's) own price, which is not saying a little either. That's not Tiptop or Green that Lady Venetia is walking with now—that's the Honourable Percy Freemantle, a man of the world

and an experienced male flirt—that is, when he has got under his wing such a one as is the daughter of the house of Pledgitt. There's Green, the banker's son, following his enchantress; he pretends that he is indifferent to the flirtation that she is at this moment carrying on with Freemantle. But that the tallest footman with the biggest calves would instantly receive him by his coat-collar, he would have fallen down on his knees long ago on the landing and have poured out his impassioned words. Decorum, however, forbids: but beneath those coral studs and elaborate shirt-front, thumps a heart in such a manner as to affect his appetite and thicken his utterance, so that when he would address his companion, Miss Brankleigh, he does so in a guttural tone, that appears to issue from somewhere under his white tie. Miss Brankleigh, who sets herself up for a bit of a 'blue,' bothers poor Green about 'Julius Cæsar.' Has Mr. Green read the Emperor's work? No, Green has not. Is he going to read it? Green doesn't know; in fact, he hasn't made up his mind; that's—yes—that is, certainly, if he has time. 'You'll consider me very ignorant, I'm sure,' says Miss Brankleigh, playfully, 'but who *was* Julius Cæsar?'

Green is brought up with a sharp pull. His mind must wander no longer.

'Who *was* Julius Cæsar?' repeats the unhappy Green, beginning to say to himself that he *ought* to know, and trying to call to mind the memories of his, not very far distant, schoolboy days. He must give an answer, and so he says, with a smile intended to assert superiority of knowledge, 'Why, he was a Roman.'

'Yes, yes,' returns Miss Brankleigh, 'I know that. But I mean, how did he—that is *if* he did—so much resemble the great Napoleon?'

Green is about to reply—by way of illustrating the historical similarity—that Julius Cæsar conquered Hannibal; but suddenly calling to mind that Napoleon the First did *not* conquer Hannibal, for the simple

reason that there was no Hannibal to conquer, he gives that up at once. A bright thought then occurs to him, and he says, 'You see they were both emperors and great conquerors, and—a—' here failing to produce any further facts, he repeats vaguely—'and a great conqueror.' He thinks a second afterwards that he might have shone a degree more brilliantly; but before he has time to make, as it were, a corrected copy of his last speech, Miss Brankleigh, who apparently eats nothing, has tackled him again.

'But were the two emperors so much alike in every respect?'

'Well,' replies Green, trying (in nautical phrase) to round the question safely, 'there were many points between the Emperor of Rome—and—' here a doubt flashes across him as to whether Cæsar was an emperor, or a consul, or a tribune, and he hesitates, and, in his nervousness, refuses the only dish that he wanted to taste. 'When I say emperor,' he resumes, finding that his fair listener expects some further information, 'I should say that Cæsar was a—' he is going to say Decemvir, but is uncertain as to its meaning; 'Cæsar was not an emperor—but had the power of an emperor.'

'Oh! of course he wasn't,' exclaims Miss Brankleigh. 'How very stupid of me to forget that!'

So thinks Green, and sincerely trusts that the conversation is at an end. Miss Brankleigh, who finds this an easy method of forming an acquaintance with all sorts of general information, continues: 'What *was* he?'

'He was a—dear me—' says the artful Green, trying to pretend that the word is on the tip of his tongue—'he was a—a—a what's-his-name, with Cæsar, Antony, and Cleopatra—I mean Lepidus—no I should say Brutus: a triumvir!' he adds triumphantly, 'a triumvir.'

'Oh! I thought,' observes Miss Brankleigh, 'that that was Octavius Cæsar.'

Poor Green! he begins to think that it *might* have been Octavius Cæsar—that it *was* Octavius Cæsar; until the probability became a certainty, and he bows down before

the lady's superior memory and knowledge of ancient history, by deciding against himself that it *was* Octavius Cæsar. If at this moment, on pain of instant bow-stringing, he was commanded, by the Pasha with three tails to write a short and precise account of Julius Cæsar, he would say, being completely and hopelessly muddled on the subject, 'Julius Cæsar was not the same as Octavius Cæsar, the triumvir with Antony and Cleopatra: he conquered Hannibal and crossed the Alps into Gaul, where he wrote his "Commentaries." Here Pompey appeared to him, and said, "We shall meet again at Philippi," which he did. Subsequently, being killed by Brutus, to whom he called out "*Et tu, Brute!*" He was a great conqueror, and there was an oration over his body.'

These great dinners are melancholy affairs. The true philosophy of meals may be fully stated in the following system, which, for the convenience of those who are inclined to follow me, I will divide into fourteen propositions. The first is—however, in this case a proposition made by my friend Jack Gourmay, who comes in to suggest, that I should at once dress and come to dine with him at his club, 'The Stilton,' in St. James's Street. Gourmay is not a man to be refused with impunity; and, moreover, *he* knows, if any one in London does, what a dinner should be. Therefore, thanking you for your kind attention, as academical lecturers say, we will, if you please, resume this interesting subject at our next meeting. I wish you all a very good morning.

F. C. B.

A MAY DREAM

OF THE FEMALE EXAMINATION.

IF you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For to-morrow in the Senate-house at nine I must appear;
To-morrow for all womankind will be a glorious day;
And I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

There's many a blue, blue-stocking, but none so blue as I;
There's not a girl amongst them all with me can hope to vie;
There's none so sharp as little Alice, not by a long, long way,
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

I lie awake all night, mother, but in the morn I sleep,
And dream of Virgil, Euclid, Dons, all jumbled in a heap;
And the letters in the Euclid dance about like lambs at play—
Oh! I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

As I came by King's Chapel, whom think ye that I saw
But Andrew Jones de Mandeville Fitzherbert Aspenshaw?
He thought of that hard problem I gave him yesterday—
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

He thought me such a bore, mother, for he couldn't get it right;
To see him puzzle o'er it was such a funny sight;
But not on such a dolt as him I'd throw myself away,
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

A May Dream.

They say he is fond-hearted, but that can never be;
 He can't get through his Little-go—then what is he to me?
 There's many a senior-wrangler who'll woo me in the May,
 For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the gate,
 And, till they give the questions out, at the window she must wait;
 And when she's got them, back to you, mother, she shall haste away—
 And I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

In the papers country parsons have written lots of trash—
 They say this scheme for us, mother, is sure to come to smash;
 And aged dons all shake their heads, and say it will not pay—
 But I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear;
 I had something more to say, mother, but my head is not quite clear;
 For I always have a headache when I put my books away—
 But I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

The June awaking.

I thought to have gone down before, but still up here I am,
 And still there's hanging o'er me that horrible exam.:
 They said I should be first, mother, but then I'd such bad luck—
 Though I went in for High Honours—I only got a pluck.

X. Y. B.

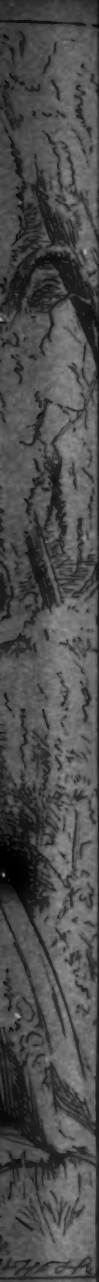


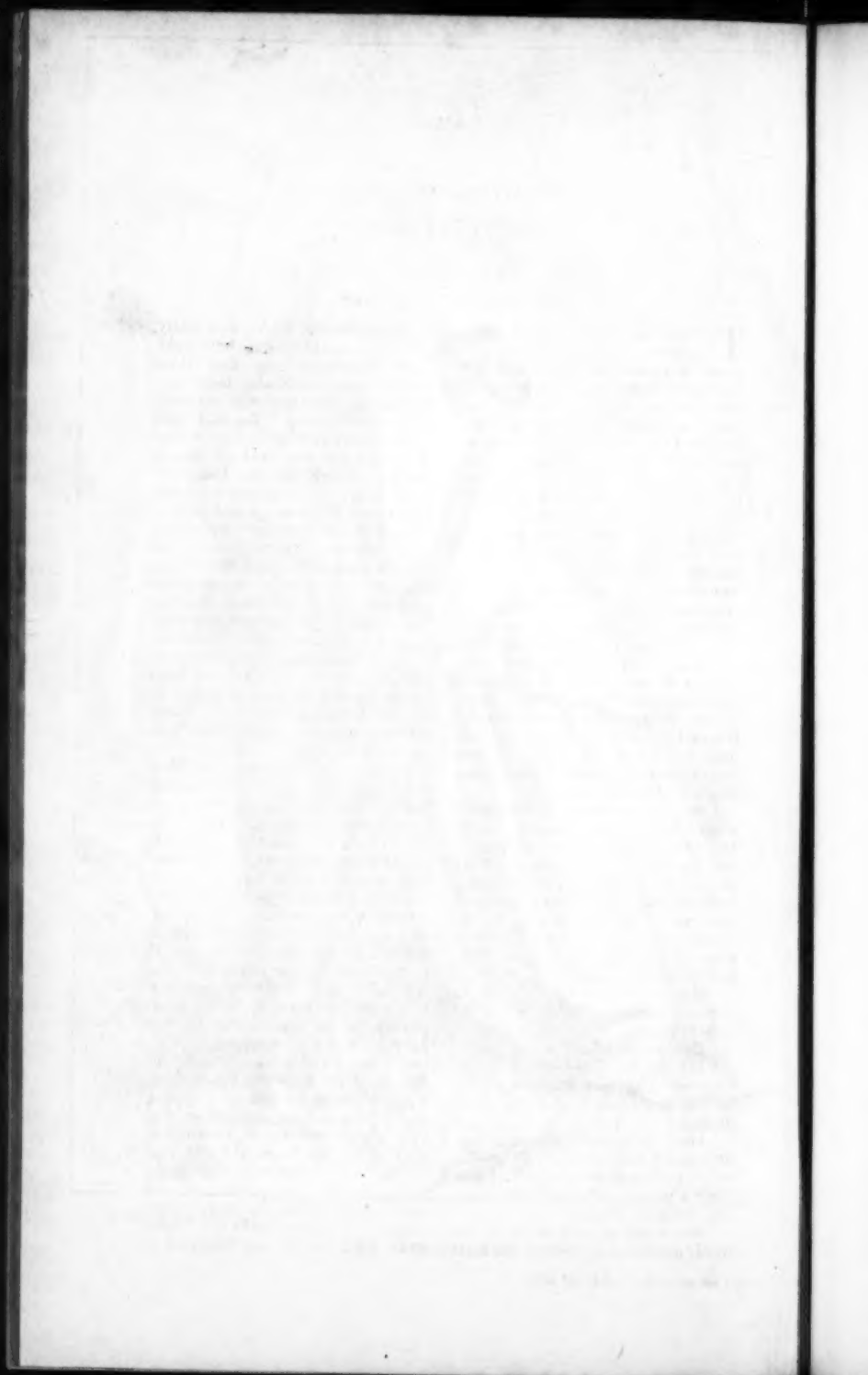


Drawn by Lois Maxma.]

THE CONFERENCE.

[See the Story, "Between the Lights."





'BETWEEN THE LIGHTS.'

A TALE IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

TWILIGHT AND JACK MORTIMER.

THE ladies (they were comprised in my wife and our sole guest, a cousin feminine) had left the dining-room; so I drew up my chair beside the open window, elevated my feet into a second, and prepared to extract the greatest amount of comfort, compatible with circumstances, from that half-hour of post-prandial bereavement, which is the Englishman's privilege.

And really circumstances just now were not otherwise than conducive to enjoyment. The soft-scented air of a sweet summer evening rustled very pleasantly through the wide-open window. The voices of the village children at play, mellowed (I am happy to say) by distance, came up ever and anon upon its gentle breath; and, it must be owned, a more delicately fragrant glass of Burgundy has seldom gladdened the heart of man than that which blushed beside my elbow on the table now.

I was, let me trust, in an appreciative and grateful frame of mind; but yet, as I sipped my Burgundy and lay back in my chair watching the tender evening light die away on the distant trees, I was conscious of a want; for, after all, he is but a churl who can contentedly drink even the glorious vintage of Burgundy alone.

'Man never is, but always to be——' I was beginning, when the door opened.

'Mr. Mortimer, sir.'

'Let us be thankful for small mercies!' I ejaculated instead; 'glad to see you, Jack! Stevens, clean glasses.'

'Am I the mercy?' inquired Jack, depositing himself leisurely in the most comfortable chair at hand.

'Not a particularly small one, then, I'm thinking, Frank.'

'Not small in any sense of the word,' answered I, pushing the Bur-

gundy across the table; and really, just now, in the vague half light, Jack Mortimer's six feet three loomed even unusually large and handsome. No, Jack was certainly not a small mercy. We had been schoolfellows at Westminster, chums at Cambridge, the best of friends always, though for the last half-dozen years or so parted by many a thousand miles of sea and land.

Even by this half-light something indescribable in the set of my old friend's ordinarily fashionable garments, a something more indescribable still in his whole bearing,—a certain large ease and freedom, as of a man accustomed to an almost unlimited amount of space to turn himself in, would have been suggestive of one fact, I think, to the most casual observer—'Home from the colonies.' And home from the colonies it was.

For the last five years Jack Mortimer had been enjoying life in the bush. Not that in his case there had existed the usual inducement for viewing life under those delightfully primitive aspects, for my friend had occupied from his youth upwards that enviable position of heir to a wealthy maiden aunt; but merely, as it seemed, from a natural and inevitable tendency in his own nature towards that simple and patriarchal state of things. There having been no particular necessity for his prospering in the line of life he had adopted, prosper, of course, he did; but a few months back, in compliance with the wishes of the maiden aunt, who was getting on in years, and craved, as she said, to see her boy (which she would have called Jack if he had been sixty, instead of well up towards thirty, as he was) take up his position in his native land before she died, he had disposed of all his flocks and herds, and come back to Old England to

settle down as a country gentleman and landed proprietor.

I had not very long previously succeeded to my own modest patrimony of Meadowsleigh, and flatter myself that that fact had some weight in the selection made by Jack of a residence: the same being a queer, rambling old house, with a valuable, but certainly improvable property attached, in my neighbourhood, called *The Wild*.

Here Jack had been domiciled for some months now, the head of a curious bachelor establishment, organized, I should say, on strictly bush principles.

As near neighbours, as well as old friends, Jack and I were accustomed to exchange unceremonious visits at all hours; so that after we had nodded to each other over our first glass, there was scarcely any need of his accounting, in a half-apologetic way, for his appearance at this particular time, by saying 'that *The Wild* was apt to feel duller than usual on these long, quiet summer evenings!'

'I can imagine a vacuum there, which, being abhorred of nature, it is consequently unnatural of you not to fill.' I said, lazily, 'Jack, why don't you marry?'

This suggestion my friend received in the silence which I had sometimes noticed it was his habit to receive remarks of a similar nature, nor was it his usual custom to lead up to such, by any reference to his bachelorhood. As he sat now, leaning back in his chair, looking very large, and brown, and handsome, and yet with unwonted gravity on his face too, a suspicion for the first time entered my head, as I glanced at him, that there might be some reason, of a tender and romantic nature, to account for his peculiar reticence on this subject; though, indeed, Jack Mortimer, with his jolly laugh, his genial face, and kindly words and looks for all the world, was not easily to be reconciled with the idea of 'blighted hopes' 'worms in the bud,' and so forth.

My wife, with whom Jack was on terms of mutual amity and goodwill (as, indeed, this gentleman is a

favourite with married ladies in general), was firmly impressed with the conviction, not only that Jack had never been in love, but that he would never marry.

'And why, madam, should you infer this of a man who is in every way calculated to adorn that honourable estate?' I inquired, when the partner of my joys first enunciated her views upon this subject. 'Is not my old friend eminently social in his habits, brimming over with all kindly affections? Why, then, should he be incapable of love, and cut off from the joys of matrimony?'

'I did not say he was incapable of love, Frank;—ah, no!' answered Mrs. Marchmont, 'though I think he will never marry. It will be some woman's loss too, for men like Mr. Mortimer—men more affectionate than passionate, more constant than ardent, make model husbands. Their wives are better loved than even their—their sweethearts (yes, Frank, I like the pretty old world name for the old, old relation, and think no other so simply expressive). And hearth and home are more to such men as he, than the rest of the world, I think.'

'Upon my word, ma'am,' I remarked in some surprise, for my wife's voice was very soft and gentle as she spoke, 'you seem to have brought a great deal of consideration and reflection to bear on the subject of Mr. Mortimer!'

'Reflection!—not at all, dear,' Mrs. Marchmont said simply; 'one feels—at least I think a woman does instinctively—the worth of such a man as John Mortimer. And he is not of that order that is most attractive to the greatest number of women either.'

'Indeed! Be good enough to explain the contradiction in your words, young woman. If Jack Mortimer is possessed of such unusual virtue, and women instinctively perceive the same, why is he not the honoured object of their regards? Or am I to understand that the female mind prefers an exhilarating sprinkling of vice in its idol, if only to throw the virtues up into broader light, as it were?'

'No, not that exactly,' Mrs. Marchmont answered rather hesitatingly; 'but I think, perhaps, that women prefer in general a—well—a more showy style of thing than Mr. Mortimer. Don't laugh, Frank.'

But I did laugh.

'Of course they do, bless their hearts! And so poor Jack is to be the victim of an unappreciating female world.'

'I don't think I meant that, either, Frank; but of this I am convinced, that any woman willing to marry Mr. Mortimer would have to make him understand it in an unmistakable manner, or he would never credit the fact.'

'Well—well, my love. Then let us hope that a lady may cross our friend's path in life with sufficient sense to appreciate his worth, and sufficient courage and candour to volunteer the state of her heart to the object for which it beats, or else we may consider his fate as sealed, I suppose.'

'Mr. Mortimer would never marry any woman who could forget in the slightest degree womanly delicacy or propriety,' my wife returned with much dignity.

'Then may the saints help him, my dear; for help from man or woman availeth not, as I understand you,' said I, dismissing the subject.

I had pooh-poohed my wife's observations, of course, thus vindicating my natural supremacy and superiority, but secretly I own they had weight with me, and I had long ago set down Jack as not a marrying man, in spite of his natural predilection for the society of women, as evinced in his seeking that of those who were safely provided with husbands.

The tender evening light was fast fading into the transparent darkness of a midsummer night as we sank into mutual silence. Streaks of mellow light from the wide-open windows of the adjacent drawing-room chequered the long shadows of tree and shrub on the lawn with broad bars of quiet light. The low airs of evening sighed tenderly to the trees, which whispered back answers all lovingly tremulous, and then, suddenly, there grew out from

that murmurous accompaniment, a strain of plaintive passion, of wondrous sweetness.

'Einsam bin Ich.'

I think we both held our breaths as that inspiration of Carl Maria von Weber's, breathing sorrowful regret, passionate yearning, came borne to us on a rich young voice; and when, in a few minutes, it sank and faltered into silence, Jack rose from his chair and leaned out of the window without speaking. 'Come,' said I, presently, 'let us join the ladies. "Music hath charms," especially on an evening like this.'

The sudden change from the darkling atmosphere of the room we had left, to the radiance of that which enshrined the ladies of my household, was a little dazzling and bewildering. Was it only that? or did I see, as Jack Mortimer turned from his friendly greeting to Mrs. Marchmont, to bow in response to my introduction of 'Mr. Mortimer' to 'Miss Francis,' a sudden start, followed by utter confusion on Jack's part, a vivid blush, and an exceedingly haughty up-rearing of the head, on that of my pretty little cousin, Beaty Francis?

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IS THE PLOT?

'So, Miss Beaty! My introduction of my friend, John Mortimer, last night, was altogether superfluous, it seems. You were already acquainted?'

'I have seen the—the gentleman before, cousin Frank,' answered Miss Francis loftily, but with that faltering, tell-tale colour rushing over her face nevertheless.

Dignity is not my cousin's forte; she can be saucy and loving, and pettish and tender, charming always, but she cannot be dignified nor awe-inspiring, consequently I pursued the subject, in no wise daunted by the little lady's displeasure.

'What, in the name of wonder, did you mean by that awful pause before "gentleman," my dear? What denomination did it take the place of?'

'Squatter, perhaps,' was the pert

answer. 'Is not that what the creatures are called, who live in the outlandish place your friend comes from?'

'Certainly not, Miss. The term is not euphonious, I admit, but it is neither one of ignominy, nor reproach, as you in your ignorance would imply, being only another name for a landed proprietor, and signifying the same thing. My friend was merely a cattle dealer, and I own it puzzles me to imagine when your high mightiness could have met an individual in so lamentably an inferior condition of life.'

'What does it matter where I met him?' my cousin burst out with a vehemence that quite startled and overwhelmed me, her sweet face crimson, her eyes filling with tears—of anger, of pain, of mortification—of what? 'I never wanted to see him; I wish I never had! Oh, how often I have wished I never, never had! Why did he not stay out at the other side of the world? I thought he was gone for ever.'

These sentences, full of 'evers' and 'nevers,' came in jerks from lips that quivered pitifully, and when they were ended, two great tears fought their way through restraining lashes, and rolled heavily down her face.

If I was utterly surprised, I was moved also. My little cousin was very dear to me; she had been my pet and plaything ever since the day when I, a rough schoolboy, used to steal away from companions of my own sex and age, to play with a pretty toddling baby in a white frock and blue shoes.

I took her two hands and drew her up beside me.

'My dear,' said I, 'I ask your pardon if I have jested on a subject that really touched you in any way. I never dreamed of your having any special interest in Jack Mortimer; how could I?'

Hard is it for the mind masculine, to follow the twists and twinings of the one feminine. I had touched the wrong string again. Up went my cousin's head, while a hot flush came to dry up the two great tears.

'And I have no interest—special or otherwise—in Mr. Mortimer. He

is nothing to me, nor ever will be. I beg you to believe that once for all, Frank.'

'Of course, dear,' said I, soothingly, but taking leave, at the same time, to doubt that assertion under the circumstances. 'Any one could see from your meeting last night that your previous acquaintance must have been of the most casual nature. A ball-room one, perhaps, dear, when you danced five out of every six dances with Jack, ate ices together under the orange trees in a shady conservatory, watched the moon out of the cool balcony, and passed him in the street the next day, without so much as even a glance of recognition. It was something of that kind, wasn't it, my little Beaty?'

'No, Frank—nothing like it. A ball-room and dancing! Oh, no, no! A death-chamber, and dying words rather. Oh, Frank, Frank! I wish I could tell you all! And with that, poor Beaty nestled her flushed face on to my breast (many a time in the old days she had cried herself to sleep there after some childish grief, or a fit of naughtiness) and wept.

'Then tell me, as, indeed, my pet, who has a better right to know all that vexes or pleases you than your poor cousin Frank; and in the dear old days that are gone, Beaty, to whom did you ever carry all your griefs (thank God, they have not been many, nor heavy, my dear!) but to him?'

'Ah, used, Frank!' she cried, nestling ever closer and closer.

'And will still—yes; for I have never separated the Beaty of to-day from the little child I used to love so dearly; and I claim the right still to be the sharer of all that pleases, all that grieves her: I shall never give it up till one comes between us with a better, and that can only be a husband.'

'No husband will ever come between us. Frank, dear, I shall never marry—never!' said Beaty, with much energy, through her tears; and beyond reiterating this presently, when she sat up and dried her eyes, I could extract nothing at all from my cousin on the subject that moved

her. I had loved this little girl very dearly. I had been accustomed to think of her as mine by a peculiarly near and familiar tie. I was wounded to think the woman could have a secret, when the child had confided all. I was hurt, and I suppose I showed it, for with a faltering smile Beatrice put her arms round my neck as she said—

'There are some things—some troubles—that are best never told, dear Frank, I think, and this is one of them. It could do me no good, and would, perhaps, be wrong also, since another person is concerned in it. You could not help me, dear, no, not if it were possible to wish to do so more than you do—which could not be, I know—and—and it's nothing new—and I don't often think of it now—only, last night, it all seemed to come back so freshly. I am afraid I have been very silly, and pained you needlessly. Don't speak or think of it any more, and I will try and forget it also.'

'One word, Beatrice; do you know that Mr. Mortimer is our near neighbour and constant visitor? Tell me, my dear, would you rather not see him any more, while you remain here?'

'Oh! I don't know; I don't care, Frank; let that be as he likes,' again with that burning colour; 'don't say any more about it,' and with this I was obliged to be content.

Feign to be so, I mean, for content I certainly was not.

A horrible, haunting idea that Jack Mortimer, whom I had hitherto sworn by, as the worthiest, kindest, most chivalrous of men, had fallen short somehow of right-doing where my little cousin was concerned, beset me painfully.

It seemed incredible, and yet how otherwise account for what had passed between my cousin and me?

I could not rest, so laying the reins upon the neck of my inclination they straightway led me in the direction of The Wild.

Mr. Mortimer was at home—yes—would I walk into the study or the dining-room, while Binks went in search of his master, who was somewhere out of doors?

'Out of doors? No—I would not come in then. I would prefer finding Mr. Mortimer myself,' and being pretty well acquainted with Jack's habits, I turned confidently down the shrubby walk that led towards the stables. The responsible-looking head groom was standing at the door of the harness room (the stable department at The Wild was much more ably administered than the rest of the establishment).

He touched his forelock in answer to my inquiry.

'Mr. Mortimer? Yes, sir, in the loose box, sir, along of Ajax—mostly there at this time. This way, sir.'

In the loose box accordingly—an apartment as spacious and much more neatly kept than the dwelling-room of many a family—I found my friend seated, pipe in mouth, and in a very easy position, on one corner of the manger, out of which black Ajax was leisurely partaking of his midday meal, yet lifting his head ever and anon to look into his master's face with that pensive kindness we see in the eyes of the horse or dog that loves us. Close at Jack's feet, too, lay an animal of the last-named species, a splendid kangaroo dog, that, too noble for jealousy, watched yet, with a certain wistfulness, the hand so often withdrawn from its resting-place in the sort of sash Jack wore, in place of a belt or braces, to fondle the horse's short velvet ears, or shining crest.

The man, the horse, and the dog, all powerful and beautiful of their kind, made a pretty picture, and verily, Jack's frank face, and kind eyes were not those of a man who could wilfully wrong any of God's creatures, great or small.

The doubt lying heavy at my heart vanished somehow, when my hand was gripped in that friendly one; but curiosity and interest, deep and overpowering, remained.

Jack duly inquired after Mrs. Marchmont's health, but referred in no way to our visitor or his recognition of her, and biding my time I made none either. After half an hour with Ajax, stable topics, local matters, crops, and neighbourly talk generally, we sauntered away from the stable precincts, out under

a row of flowering limes, where the bees were making drowsy music.

One of those intervals of silence had befallen—that more than anything, almost, goes to show the complete intimacy that subsists between those who indulge it in each other's society—and presently into this silence stole the plaintive music of that melody of last night, whistled very deftly and sweetly, whistled as I think only one man can execute that accomplishment, that man being Jack Mortimer.

I let him finish and then turned rather suddenly:—

'By-the-bye, Jack, you never told me you were acquainted with my cousin, Beatrice Francis!'

Jack's brown face gained a perceptible access of colour.

'Didn't I? Well—no—I dare say I never did. I saw her once, I think, before I went to Australia, five years ago—never since I came home, till last night. I don't even know, being mightily ignorant on such matters, whether one meeting gives me any right to claim acquaintanceship with Miss Francis—what should you say, Frank?'

'That it depends upon the circumstances under which the meeting took place, of course,' I answered, remembering with great perplexity Beaty's reference to death-chambers and dying words. Under what possible combination of circumstances could these, my friend Jack, and my little cousin be associated?

I had been quite as accustomed to suppose I possessed Jack's confidence as well as that of my cousin; yet here evidently was a mystery I was not to know, and one that had existed for five years, apparently, without my ever having had an inkling of it. I had felt wounded on the first discovery; by this time I began to experience a feeling of injury, and, with perhaps unwise frankness, avowed the same.

Jack withdrew his pipe from his lips, shook out the ashes in troubled silence, put the pipe slowly into its case, and the case into his pocket, before he spoke.

'I hate mysteries and secrets; they are not at all in my way, as

you know, old friend. I never expected the thing to befall me that I could not talk over with you; but, Frank, there comes something into most men's lives, sooner or later, that they do not care to speak of, that no good could come of speaking of, and besides——' He paused and then added: 'This is not my own affair either, entirely—another is concerned as well as I——'

'Why, those were Beaty's very words and reasons for denying me any explanation,' I ejaculated in intense astonishment.

'Have you spoken to Miss Francis—to your cousin on the subject?' asked Jack, flushing.

'Certainly, and got the same amount of satisfaction as from yourself.'

'Thank Heaven, then, that I never breathed word of it to living creature,' said Jack. 'I might have done it one day to you, Frank, though I never regarded myself as having any right to talk of it. But tell Miss Francis—assure her from me, that I never have, never will now—she need never fear any allusion, not the slightest, to what is gone, from me—tell her this, please, Frank,' said Jack, earnestly.

'I'll tell her nothing of the kind. Hang me if I ever speak to either of you again on the matter!' I answered, losing patience; 'and I wish your future wife joy of the nice little Bluebeard secret you carry about with you, Jack!'

'I shall never marry,' Jack said quietly.

'Grant me patience,' I cried out; 'she said that, too!'

'Did she?' inquired Jack, very earnestly.

The next minute he turned away his head, and I heard him mutter; 'Oh! Amy, Amy!'

In a few minutes more Jack and I parted, for the first time in our lives, with mutual relief.

CHAPTER III.

IN SEARCH OF SOCIETY.

A week, a fortnight went by; long days of rich unclouded sunshine, evenings of tranquil sweetness,

evenings long, and still, all perfumy with the breath of flowers, like those Jack had declared made the loneliness of his empty old house intolerable to him; but neither glancing sunshine, nor tranquil sunset brought my old friend any more to Meadowaleigh.

I cannot tell all that want was to me; I scarce knew myself; and I chafed angrily, as I was forced to own that I was powerless to do anything but mourn over it.

Who but Jack himself, could judge how far his presence was fitting in the house where the sharer of this precious mystery was for the present domiciled?

At the end of the first week I had called at The Wild; but Mr. Mortimer was from home, and not expected to return till night: at the end of another, I sallied forth once more in that direction.

The footway to the domain called The Wild led up through my own grounds, crossed the high road, and entered my friend's by a low gate. The day was one of these same summer ones, bright and still, hot and glowing. Brilliant sunshine steeped all the fields of waving grain, fast ripening now to harvest, in floods of golden light; but the arching trees that met overhead, above the pretty woodland path I walked, only admitted here and there glimpses of that glowing splendour. Shadows, broad and cool, closed all around me; the light that came in here, all soft, and dim, and broken, caused one to think of solemn old churches in a land beyond the sea; dim with painted windows, misty with incensed altars, and grave with the gathered memories of all the bygone years. Perhaps, too, of trysting-places, and waiting lovers, all the joy of meeting made tremulous, and sorrowfully sweet, by the shadow of that inevitable parting that waits upon all meetings here. As this last thought strayed across my fancy, I reached a sudden opening in the trees around me, through which the pathway wound, and turning into it, I came to an abrupt halt in utter and unbounded surprise.

Lovers and trysting-places, truly!

Why, what was this, and who were these, standing among the flickering shadows yonder? Surely I could not mistake that figure, full of graceful lines and flexible curves; I knew every one of them by heart. I knew, too, the downward bend of that golden head, with its pretty rippled hair drawn into a knot behind the ears; I could fancy the very look on the downcast face at this moment, though it was turned from me—and then—well—yes, I knew my cousin Beaty's usual walking dress of simple holland, and the little velvet hat with the bright wing—in which she looked—like herself, in short, and like no one else ever did, in my eyes.

And if this was unmistakably my cousin Beatrice, the tall gentleman in light morning clothes, the set of which was somehow so indescribably loose and easy, who stood hat in hand beside her, speaking so earnestly, and looking so steadily at the bent-down face that yet turned towards him too, was no less certainly Mr. John Mortimer.

How long had this conference between these two apparently hostile powers lasted? How long was it going to last? Was a truce being declared, war determined on? Or was peace, mild-eyed and beautiful, hovering sweetly over this communing pair?

How could I tell, who had never been admitted within the mysterious circle that seemed somehow to enclose these two? Should I advance now, on my way, which would lead me straight upon the unconscious creatures? or should I turn back and pretend I had not seen what I had? While I still remained dubious, pondering these things, Beaty turned and saw me; and observing that without an instant's hesitation she came slowly towards me, and that Mr. Mortimer followed her, I in my turn advanced.

I did not care to look too closely into the child's face, as she came up and quietly put her hand within my arm, but I did look at Jack.

He coloured a little, but he met my eyes very frankly and steadily, and when he held out his hand, it was with the unmistakable look

about him, somehow, of a man who never had, who never could do anything he was ashamed to be caught in.

'I was on my way to The Wild, Jack.'

'Were you? It is well we fell in, then, for I was coming over to call on Mrs. Marchmont, whom it seems an age since I saw. I met Miss Francis a few yards from here, and learnt she was at home.'

Was that simple inquiry the one Jack was making so earnestly as I came upon them?

We all turned, and strolled back towards Meadowsleigh together, I disguising whatever curiosity I had (I may as well own, it was intense) under, as I flatter myself, a very perfectly simulated aspect of unconsciousness that my companions stood towards each other in any than the ordinary relations of a lady and gentleman who met then and there, for the second or third time in their lives; but I speedily arrived at the conviction that that confabulation among the trees, which I had interrupted, had partaken of the nature of a truce, or an accommodation, at least, the demeanour of the contracting parties was so evidently in accordance with rules and regulations laid down and agreed upon.

Jack did not, as on the occasion of their former meeting in my drawing-room, refrain from addressing or even glancing in the direction of Miss Francis; on the contrary, he studiously, not to say laboriously, endeavoured to include her in the desultory talk by which we beguiled the way; and poor little Beaty, with a manner lamentably differing from her usual one, all the careless flow of her pretty talk sobered into constrained and measured cadence, gravely followed his lead.

I think both were glad when we reached the house, and they were released from any necessity of keeping up this show of common intercourse. But from this time the communication between The Wild and Meadowsleigh was resumed upon something of its old footing; and yet no, for I never now, as I threw up my window of a morning, and leaned out to inhale the health-

giving breeze of early morn, was greeted by a cheery voice nor gladdened with a sight of Jack Mortimer, coming, with those long quiet strides of his, across the dewy lawn of Meadowsleigh in time for an early breakfast. He did not drop in to luncheon, nor saunter up between the lights in his old fashion. It is true he might still have come at some of these times, but never now without being asked.

Nor did these symptoms of an agreed on and regulated demeanour towards each other, which I had detected at first between my cousin and my friend, disappear on continued intercourse. They showed now, in a mitigated form, perhaps, but they were still observable.

And over my little cousin a shadow had fallen, that, try to hide it as she would, she could not cover from my sight. I could not accuse her of moping or pining—she did not sullenly turn her back upon life and its duties, refuse companionship, nor decline her daily meals. No; whatever her trouble was, she strove with it, as the good, healthy-minded English girl she was, and had evidently never a thought of giving up, nor giving in.

But as I noted sometimes how the sweet laughter would falter into sudden silence—the words lightly begun and in a sigh—her pretty, childish beauty deepen, and sadden at times, into thoughtful womanhood—my heart was sore within me. My little Beaty! thou wert very dear to me; but, alas! what human love avails to shield its object from the doom of all the world? I could only stand silently on one side, and grieve that it had come at last upon thee—that burden and heat of thy day here, which I could neither lighten nor share. Ah! I think there are few sadder moments in life than these—these in which we realize with a cruel pang that all our love, tender and true though it be, is powerless. 'The world goes sobbing through space,' none who live upon it can escape the doom of sorrow, and regret, and tears.

And so summer days stole away on noiseless feet, and with the au-

turn came that time for Jack, which, let us hope, is seldom one of rejoicing, pure and unalloyed; that time when expectation becomes fulfilment, and the heir comes into his kingdom. The kind old maiden lady at Charleswood went quietly to her rest, and John Mortimer of The Wild, was now also lord of the fair domain of Charleswood, and a personage of considerable importance in the county where it was situate.

But when he came last to The Wild after some weeks of absence, and we walked under the limes, whose leaves shivered silently to the ground beneath our feet, I was vexed to observe that my old friend was disposed to treat this fact but lightly, and that in his mood and conversation generally there was a discontent, and gloom almost, quite unwonted in him. His sudden appearance, during my stroll, was somewhat unexpected, and I said so as I welcomed him.

'I seem to have been away an age, too,' he answered, hastily; 'and I came—upon my soul, I hardly know why I came, except that I was horridly lonely up at Charleswood, and no wonder! Not that The Wild is much better, though, only, at any rate, I don't miss there a kind old face I used to know. Frank, if it had not been for the dear old lady I should never have come home, I think; and since she's gone, I can't do better than go back again. I declare, if it was possible, I'd go back to the bush to-morrow.'

'In search of society?' I inquired.

Jack laughed, but the next instant he sighed.

'Ah! you may laugh at the idea of a man who has been five years in the bush, crying out at the solitude of an old country house under bachelor rule; but I can tell you solitude is not at all the same thing there—nothing like boredom in the bush, Frank; and somehow a friend's face seems all the more worth seeing, when you have ridden over fifty miles of green slope and swell, with that sole end in view. In fact, I think a man must go to the bush before he really understands the

meaning of the word "neighbour." No offence to you, old boy.'

'None in the world; but, for a gentleman of passably engaging manners, decidedly handsome means, in a moderately populous, and sociably disposed neighbourhood, to complain of solitude, and talk of flying to the bush for society, strikes me as a fact requiring explanation. If Charleswood and The Wild are dull, fill them with friendly faces, dear lad; they are never turned away from such as thee.'

But Jack shook his head.

'The dear old country seems to have grown small, Frank. I feel in the way here.'

We were just at the end of the shadowy avenue of limes as he spoke, and the next instant there was a faint rustle among the withered leaves on the grass, and my cousin Beaty glided into it, and faced us. We both started a little, but the little lady held out her hand to Mr. Mortimer with ever so quiet a smile, and then swept away, before we could turn and accompany her.

Jack looked after her for an instant, and there was trouble in his eye.

'Miss Francis is not looking well,' he said; 'she has grown thin, and pale.'

CHAPTER IV.

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS.

There was no prettier nor cosier room in all comfortable and picturesque old Meadowsleigh than that one appropriated to its master, and called 'Mr. Marchmont's study.' It was sacred to myself, and I was chary of allowing the intrusion of my household across its threshold, feeling that the 'business' in which I talked solemnly of being engaged during a quiet hour or so, when it pleased me to retire from the bosom of my family into its comfortable seclusion, might perhaps suffer in the respect of its members, if they found how often it was transacted with a cigar between my lips and in a position of recumbency on a lounge constructed with many cunning

contrivances for insuring the greatest amount of comfort, with the least expenditure of effort, on the part of the individual who sought its sleepy hollow.

The fire had sunk down into a deep red glow on the wide tessellated hearth, my favourite hound was sleeping peacefully in its heat, all the room was full of brooding shadows, and that wavering glow from the fire only very dimly defined the large person of Jack Mortimer as he lay extended very much at his ease on that same lounge.

A tap at the long window that opens upon the shrubbery.

'If you please, sir, Jones would thank ye to walk down to the stable. Lady Betty went dead lame to-day, sir, while one of the boys had her out exercising, sir.'

Uttering an anathema upon boys in general, and stable boys in particular, I caught up my cap and hastened away without a word of excuse to Jack, who was, moreover, half asleep.

I might, perhaps, have been absent half an hour, for I had to wait the veterinary surgeon's arrival and report upon the disaster of my favourite mare; and when I presently re-entered my sanctum, which I did by the window, as I departed, I stood still a moment surveying the sight that presented itself to my eyes.

Not with surprise—no—I flatter myself I had entirely overcome any tendency to that emotion where Jack Mortimer and my cousin Beaty were concerned; for of course, those young people composed the tableau on which I looked.

It was not otherwise than a pretty one, I am bound to confess that. There was Jack seated easily back on my favourite resting-place, and by his side—and so very close, that Jack's arm could scarce have found a position anywhere but round her waist—nestled Miss Beaty. As far as I knew, he had hardly hitherto touched the little finger-tips of my pretty cousin, and now—lo—but I was calm, and advanced into the charmed circle within the firelight, as if for a lady and gentleman apparently on the most formal terms

of acquaintanceship, to assume the present relative position of these two, was among my most ordinary and familiar experiences.

'Wish me joy, Frank, old fellow,' said Jack, jumping up then.

'I wish you all possible joy,' I answered meekly; 'none the less sincerely, that I don't in the least know of what.'

'I should think it was plain enough, too,' Mr. Mortimer answered, turning to draw Beaty up beside him; 'but I am afraid you are vexed, old boy, that we should have had a secret from you all this time. I suppose we have each fancied it the other's; but now it can be yours, too, Frank, if Beaty will tell it.'

'Not I, Jack. I came here this evening meaning to tell Frank, and made a sad mess of it (here she glanced up at Jack, with the most enchanting look imaginable). You do it this time. Sit here, Frank, dear.'

And my little cousin, bless her loving heart! seeing that I was grave (which I was, through sheer bewilderment), and fearing that I was wounded, sat down by me on the side not next Jack, and her soft cheek lay against my shoulder while I listened.

'I don't know whether you remember my sister Amy, Frank,' Jack began; 'I think it is likely enough you may not, for you could not have seen her many times. My home was always at Charleswood with my aunt, and after Amy left school she went to live down in Essex with her guardian. We two were pretty much alone in the world, and perhaps that was the reason we thought a great deal of one another—at least I know I was very fond of my little sister.'

'And she thought there was no brother in all the world to compare with hers, and never tired of talking of him,' murmured a voice on my left—Jack was on my right.

'And perhaps I never heard of Miss Beaty Francis, either, before I saw her,' answered Jack. 'I remember I laughed one day when Amy was setting forth her perfections, and said she must introduce

me, and perhaps I might be the happy man who would win this paragon for his wife. Perhaps this unlucky speech of mine first turned my little sister's thoughts towards such a thing, though it passed entirely out of my mind; for very soon afterwards Amy fell into delicate health, and before many months were over I knew that we should not have her long.

Jack paused here. When he resumed his voice was lower, and Beaty's face was hidden against my shoulder.

'It was a sad time, and I don't care to think of it. She sank very rapidly, and one day burst a blood-vessel; after that we knew the end must come very soon. She knew it herself, too, and pined so much to see her dear little school-friend Beaty Francis, that her kind old guardian went up to London himself, to beg Miss Francis might be allowed to return with him to bid the poor dying child "Good-bye!"'

'I have never forgotten that day you came, nor how I first saw you,' Jack went on, addressing himself now to Miss Beaty, with that involuntary softening of his deep voice as he did so which tells a tale to those who listen.

'Often and often out in Australia, when I have been sitting quite alone in my hut, with the level sunset light streaming through the open door, I have seen it all over again. That golden light coming across the low Essex lands, and flickering on the wall above the sofa where Amy lay, her poor little wasted face propped upon pillows; and lying beside it, pressed close against it, your fresh rosy face, and your yellow hair, so bright and wavy, mixed with hers, all dark and straight. I did not think much about it at the time, but I suppose it must have made some impression. I remembered it all so often afterwards; then I thought of little, but my poor Amy. Your coming seemed to have put new life into her. She had scarcely spoken for days, now she laughed and talked so gaily, that something almost like a hope began to wake up in my heart. I looked over at

you, and said, I remember, that you were the best doctor that had come near Amy yet, and that I thought a few days of your company would do all they had not been able to accomplish. And then—but you remember.'

'Yes,' whispered Beaty.

'I do not,' I could not refrain from reminding these absorbed creatures.

'I beg your pardon, Frank,' returned Jack, with quite a start; 'I had forgotten I was telling you.'

'So it seems. But go on, my dear old fellow.'

'Think of Amy, then, Frank, as a very young, very warm-hearted and loving—romantic, perhaps, and lifted, by the knowledge that she was dying, above ordinary, everyday life; very sorry for me, too, whom her death would leave but with very few to care much about me—think of her so, and then perhaps you will understand how it all came about: that, holding her friend's hands in hers, she asked her to promise her something, and that Beaty answered, "Yes—willingly—gladly—anything!" Then, looking across at me, Amy asked me to do the same. How could I dream what the poor child's thoughts were fixed on? I answered, as Beaty had done. And then—then—with a light in her dying eyes, and a smile on her mouth, she told us that what she asked of us, what she had longed for, thought over, and prayed for, was, that we two would marry. That we had promised to grant her what she asked, and she asked that.

'Just imagine, if you can, our awful confusion while we listened, Frank; I'm sure I can't depict it. I only dared once look towards Miss Francis, and then saw nothing of her face—only one little ear and a part of her throat, and they were flushed with deep, and, I felt sure, indignant crimson. I was unutterably pained and shocked; but could I reproach my little dying sister? I did try to laugh the matter off, awkwardly enough, I dare say; at any rate, I failed, and made matters worse. "How could I joke on such a subject, or dream that she

could do so with dying lips?" Amy said.

'Be angry with her I neither could nor would; and when all was over (she died with her arms round my neck that night, Frank) it was only left me to try and make the best of the matter with Miss Francis. I told her—at least I tried to—that she need never think herself bound by a promise so given—that she need never fear my insulting her, by making any claim upon it.'

'Oh, Jack, Jack, you incorrigible old blunderer!' I could not forbear crying out here; 'so you as good as told a lady you would not have her.'

'I suppose I did blunder horribly; I've no doubt I did,' answered Jack, seriously; 'for certainly Miss Francis—'

'Behaved very foolishly, I am afraid,' here broke in the voice on my left. 'But I was very young—only a schoolgirl—and the idea would torment me that you might think Amy had talked of—of what she wished to me before, and that perhaps I knew what the promise she asked referred to, before it was given. Thinking this, I felt so horribly ashamed, I could not bear to see you. I thought I never should be able.'

'Only it appears to me that you have changed your mind on that point, Miss,' pinching the little fingers that lay in mine.

'Yes, Frank,' responded the demure monkey.

'Since when, pray? for deuce take me if I can understand how you and Jack, who seemed only this morning as far as the poles asunder, can have arrived, in the space of half an hour, at the—well—I think I may say without offence, "close relations," in which I found you.'

'Don't, Frank, dear!' whispered Miss Beaty. 'I'll tell you another time.'

'No time like the present. Come,

Jack. I comprehend now, how the hostile attitude came about. Do clear up the mystery of the allied one.'

'It was arrived at very simply, too. Miss Francis and I have been under the mutual impression all this time, that we were respectively disagreeable to each other. By a—little accident this evening we found out that we were mutually mistaken, and so—. I think that will do, Frank.'

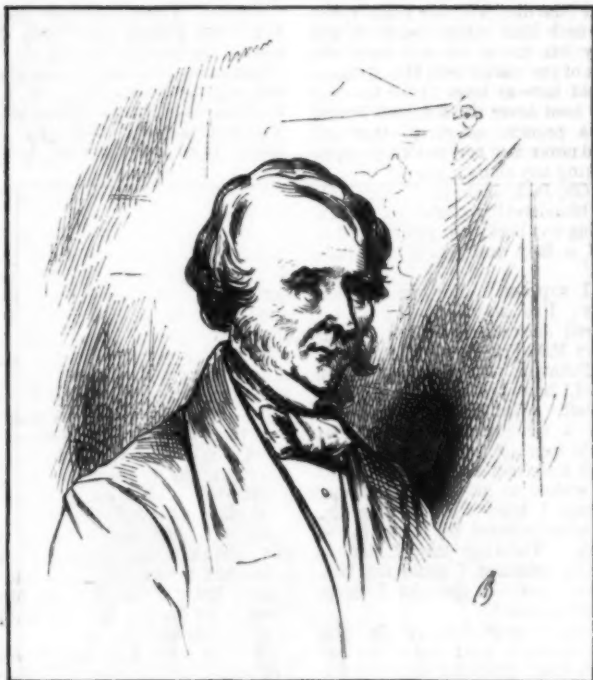
'By Jove! no; for I declare I'm all in the dark.'

'We were in the dark, cousin Frank,' Miss Beaty whispered here, laughing and blushing, I dare say; certainly turning her face so that it should be invisible to Jack, who had risen by this time, and was standing before the fire. 'At least, no—it was "between the lights," and I came in here to talk to you about something that was making me very unhappy—something I heard you and—Mr. Mortimer talking of this afternoon in the avenue—about his going away to Australia for good, I mean. I thought it was you lying on the sofa, Frank. And before I had found out it was not, I had said—I don't know what. But Mr. Mortimer knew then I did not d'—like him; and so—and so—'

'And so poor little Amy's wish has come about, after all, thank God! And I don't think I shall go farther for a home now than Charleswood, unless Beaty particularly prefers the bush,' concluded Jack, coming to the rescue.

'And my shrewd little wife's prediction is verified, also,' I observed, 'that if ever Jack Mortimer married, the lady would have to make the first confession of love. There, Beaty, never hide your face, my dear. Methinks a woman need scarce do that, when she owns to loving John Mortimer, no more at shining noonday than "between the lights."'

FELLOWS.



F. R. S.—(Type the First.)

HOW desperately some men struggle in life to obtain the privilege of adding honorary initials to their name; and if one could only look behind the scenes of action and of toil, we should see how bitter are the disappointments, how exquisitely painful the annihilation of hope, when a candidate for the membership of one of our learned societies is not permitted to join the great body towards which he gravitates, and is refused the distinction of adding those mystic letters to his ordinary cognomen which raises a man at once from the ranks of mere citizenship, and places him amongst the *cognoscenti* of society! In the same way that ciphers placed before or after a unit make just all

the difference in its value, so initial letters placed either before or after a man's family label give it insignificance or weight. Mr. Frederick Richard Sydney Small is nobody; but the identical Mr. Small with the initials of his names following, not preceding his Smallship, bids him become F.R.S. (Fellow of the Royal Society), and raises him at once from a decimal to a unit of value, with as good as three ciphers on the right side, representing worth and importance. Like a kite refusing, without a tail, to rise to the high empyrean, is the individual who is unable to add some sort of alphabetical tail, or adjunct, or balance, to his rising in the world. The only drawback is, there are such a

large number of honorary distinctions now-a-days that even that noble lion the Royal Academician, after his apotheosis has taken place, must look down from the cloudy heights where he associates in seclusion with Zeus himself, and tremble as he views the array of learned giants piling distinctive initials heavenward, and threatening to scale the highest pinnacles of Parnassus. What a Pelion upon

Ossa is R.A. (Royal Academician) united to F.R.S! What a basis to work upon is F.R.I.B.A. (Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects)! Those cabalistic letters F.R.S. are indeed well worth possessing, suggesting as they do our oldest scientific body in existence; and when we remember the flood of light which the 'Philosophical Transactions' has cast upon the world, it is indeed a real honour



F. R. S.—(Type the Second.)

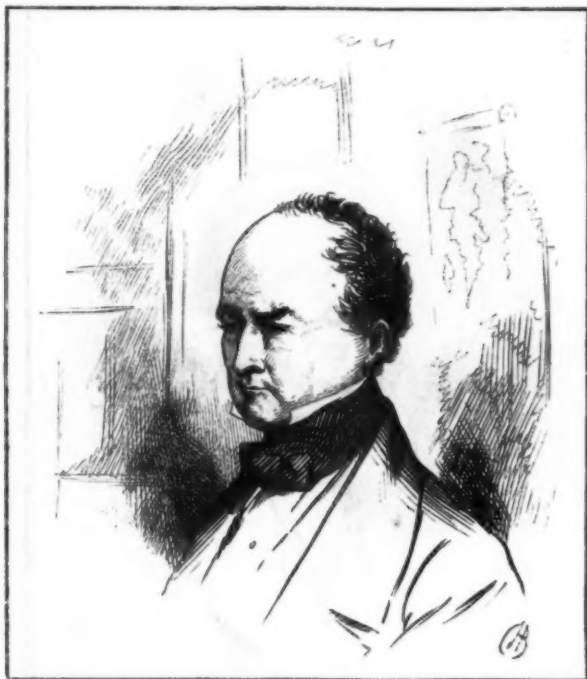
to join a corporate association which ranks amongst its archives the most illustrious names that the ever-rotating cycle of the sciences has whirled into fame.

How curious is the fact that the word 'fellow,' which certainly fails to convey an idea of dignity or wisdom, should be the one chosen to describe the members of the learned societies! There is no noun-sub-

stantive in the English language used so vicariously; and the variety of its meanings are as endless as the combinations of Mr. Babbage's calculating machine. At Eton or Rugby 'fellow,' with the adjective 'good' or 'bad,' tells its own tale; and at college 'slow' or 'fast,' coupled with the name, shadows forth the probable academical honours of Jones, Brown, and Ro-

binson. 'What a fellow you are!' is a common expression, but which, according to the tone of voice, conveys meanings vastly different; or 'I say, old fellar, let's go to Ascot,' is a form of speech whose fascination it is impossible to escape. Sometimes, in more slangy nomenclature, other words of like genre have the insolence to usurp the place of 'fellow,' and the expression 'a stingy curmudgeon,' or 'a rummy old

buffer,' exhibits that inordinate desire for change which the lover of familiar expletives usually exhibits. Even the fair sex are not free from the epithet, for they are often 'fellows' of associations, and a 'Fellow of the Botanic Society' appears in crinoline and rustling silk, and sweet odour, and graceful presence, and tender bearing; not in any way like the idea which the male-sounding word 'fellow' usually implies. Not



F. R. G. S.

content with single independence, the word often appears as a compound, and entering into the bonds of matrimony becomes fellow-creature, yoke-fellow, bed-fellow, *cum multis aliis*. Perhaps its strongest and most terrible form (in relation to sound, not to orthography) is that last act of a weak and foolish fellow who commits a crime which in legal parlance is termed *felo-de-se*.

Then the various jokes, good, bad, and indifferent, which the fellows of learned societies occasion. F.R.S. has been rendered Fellow Remarkably Stupid. C.B. (Commander of the Bath), though not within our present category when speaking of the learned societies, has tried the ingenuity of many a wag, being sometimes translated as Confirmed Bore, and anon as Confirmed Bache-

lor. Probably these two last descriptions blend and harmonize, and become stereoscopic, and melt into one picture. F.S.A. (Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries) has been thought to mean 'Fellow of the Sulky Athenæum,' a base insinuation, invented by some silly fellow who after ten years of probation found himself A.B.B., which may be construed either as 'Associate of British Big-wigs,' or 'Awfully Black-

Balled.' Contented vanity would doubtless prefer the first reading of the *primæres literæ*, if it be not an Irishism to so call letters which follow instead of preceding a name.

We herewith present a few specimens of the said Fellows to our readers; and possibly a brief description of each of the societies suggested by our artist's sketches may interest—not those who sat (all



F. S. A.

unconsciously) for their portraits, but fellows of society generally.

The *Royal Academy of Arts*, Trafalgar Square, was established for the promotion and encouragement of painting, sculpture, and architecture; and was opened Jan. 2nd, 1769, on which occasion Sir Joshua Reynolds, its first President, was knighted. Its meetings were originally held in Market Lane, near

Pall Mall; but in 1771, a portion of Somerset House was set apart for its use; and in 1837 it was removed to its present position in Trafalgar Square.

It consists of forty Academicians, twenty Associates, and, latterly, Academician and Associate Engravers, with Professors of painting, sculpture, architecture, perspective, anatomy, ancient literature, and an-

cient history. Its members are not permitted to belong to any other society of artists in London. The Associates are chosen from the annual exhibitors, and the Academicians from the Associates.

Its schools, which are intended for the advancement of anatomical knowledge and taste of design, consist chiefly of two departments, one relating to the study of the best re-

mains of ancient sculpture, the other to the study of living models, and include a school of painting. The candidate for admission as a student must be a proficient in drawing and modelling, and be acquainted with anatomy, at least so far as it includes a knowledge of the skeleton and first layer of muscles. If seeking admission as a painter, he must send in, as a specimen of his abili-



R. A.

ties, a chalk drawing about two feet in height, of an undraped statue or a torso; if as a sculptor, the model of a similar figure, either in the round or in relief; and if as an architect, the plan, elevation, and section of some simple original design, and a drawing from plates. If what he exhibits is approved of, the candidate is admitted on trial for three months, during which time

he has an opportunity of executing other specimens; and if these are satisfactory he is admitted, without any charge, a student for seven years; and, should he obtain a medal, he becomes a student for life. Failure does not preclude him from other attempts, except he is found to have presented the works of others as his own. As the students are expected to make themselves

well acquainted with the rules of the Academy, none can plead ignorance of them as an excuse for transgressing them.

The Academy, in time of peace, sends in rotation from each of the classes to the Continent one of the students who has obtained gold medals, to study for two years, paying his travelling expenses and the cost of his maintenance.

That mean building in the square dedicated to Nelson's glory, and often compared to a cruet, its two domes standing for the pepper-casters, is the spot where the R.A. is in his glory. There, either at the May Exhibition, in the National Gallery, or the drawing-school, he can wander and muse as he pleases. To him the place is full of memories. Close by, in St. Martin's Lane, Hogarth studied. Not far off, in the Adelphi, chivalrous, half-crazed Barry perished for fame. In the painting-school of the Academy cautious, taciturn Wilkie drew side by side with noisy, ambitious Haydon. There little leonine Fuseli ranted about poetry and the Greeks. There also are sombre, grand Roman landscapes by poor Wilson, who almost starved till the Academy made him at the last moment their librarian. Not a picture in the academic rooms but has its strange history. Here is a beautiful 'Satyr and the Nymphs,' presented by Etty after his long struggles for success. And close by a glowing Reynolds and a meretriciously beautiful Lawrence.

The R.A. in meditative moments must often wander through the Cruet Stand with thoughts of past triumphs and past disappointments. He must think of the day when, with a portfolio of drawings under his arm, he knocked at Flaxman's or at Chantrey's door; of the proud day when first he became a probationary student, and was allowed to take his seat on the little sharp square wooden stool, placed reverently before the seated Mars, the Jason tying his Sandal, the Dying Gladiator, the blatant Hercules, or the Faun, whose wanton mirth no time can lessen. Then he thinks of the day when first, with blushing cheek and trembling voice,

trying to be grand and indifferent, he presented his first picture to the terrible porter, who is so contemptuously calm; and of that still more dreadful day when he found it was rejected, and had to fish it out from vast stacks of other rejected pictures, all marked with the fatal white chalk crosses of rejection. Then he would think of his first triumphs—of the first great picture—of the crowds round it—of the first eager purchaser—and how he wrangled with some less fortunate dealer or amateur who lost his temper because he failed to get the great picture—and so on from triumph to triumph till the title was gained, and with it honour, wealth, and European fame. And now the annual dinner—that moment when the gas is suddenly turned on with a sudden rush, as of a hasty daylight, and all the wonders of the art break upon his view—it is the proudest in the R.A.'s life.

The *Royal Society*, Somerset House, was established in 1634, and incorporated in 1662; and is therefore the oldest institution connected with science in London. Its objects are extremely varied; its labours have been productive of great advantage to the physical and mathematical sciences; and to be a member of it has always been considered a high honour. The Fellows are elected. The 'Philosophical Transactions' were first published in 1665, and, with some interruptions, have been continued since.

The *Royal Society* dates back to the time of Charles II., the shrewd, swarthy monarch who propounded to the Fellows the celebrated problem about the fish in the bucket, the puzzle of which consisted only in the impossibility of the experiment. It has grown to manhood since the days when Swift ridiculed Boyle's meditations and the frivolous experiment of the fashionable cognoscenti—when Butler, in 'Hudibras,' laughed at the philosophers who mistook a fly on the telescope-glass for a monster in the moon. It has survived all that early ridicule, and now it has the laugh on its side. It has erased many errors, and done much to

destroy mischievous superstitions. It was one of the first of the learned bodies to expose the follies of alchemy, even when patronized by royalty, the last great claimant of the art of gold-making having destroyed himself to prevent exposure at the hands of this learned Society. It still continues its labours in the cause of science, by aiding discoverers and concentrating into one focus many scattered rays of light that would otherwise be 'dispersed to naught.'

The *Society of Antiquarians*, of London, Somerset House, was instituted in 1717, and incorporated in 1751. Its object is the advancement of antiquarian knowledge and history, both as they relate to this and other countries. Its ordinary meetings are held on Thursdays, and its annual meeting on St. George's Day, unless it falls on a Sunday. The Fellows are elected by ballot, on a written testimonial signed by at least three of the Fellows of the society, one of whom certifies from personal knowledge, and the others from acquaintance with his works.

The *Society of Antiquarians* has had much to bear since the days of Ben Jonson and those of Shadwell. There was a time when the antiquarian—the Dryasdust, was a stock-butt for the novelist, the dramatist, and the wit. Even Scott had his Monkbarns as a whetstone for his kindly satire, and under the shadow of that character he laughed at many of his own peculiarities, at his own credulity and too great readiness of faith, at his spurious *Roman camp*, and the forged ballads with which his friends rather too freely deceived him. We have all laughed at the collector with his 'brick of Babylon,' which his zealous servant, in her ardour for cleanliness, one day in his absence carefully divested of its invaluable cement, a thousand years old. Smollett, too, raised a hearty laugh at the antiquarian who would make all his friends ill by treating them to a supper after the manner of the ancients.

But still, though too sanguine, and often trivial and restricted in his historical views, the antiquarian has

done more than any one to re-write English history, to advance etymology and the science of language, and to improve topography.

The *Royal Astronomical Society*, Somerset House, was established in 1820, and incorporated in 1831. It was instituted for the promotion of astronomical science. Its ordinary meetings are held on the second Friday of every month, and its annual meeting on the second Friday in February. Abstracts of the papers read are published in monthly 'Notices,' and their details in half-yearly 'Memoirs.' The Fellows are elected.

The F. R. A. S., with the fine fleece of hair and the swan's neck of white cravat, scarcely looks to the ordinary observer a person likely to be a friend of Mars, and on the best speaking terms with half the planets. Yet those courteous, smiling eyes have beheld sights such as few have beheld—occultations of starry worlds—luminous burstings into blossom of previously unknown planets—the fiery charges into space of wild comets, broken loose from the Sun's stables—the revolving of Jupiter's moons, and the glory of Saturn's belts.

In no black velvet robe, stamped with trine and cross, such as the astrologers of old wore, but in the plain evening dress of a quiet English gentleman, our F. R. A. S. has looked through his telescope and seen worlds no bigger than calomel pills spinning round each other and executing extraordinary dances, the figures of which take some millions of years in the accomplishment. He talks of billions of miles as coolly as other men do of the distance between London and Bath. Indeed, take him altogether in his relationship to the visible or the invisible world, as Jove's cousin, or as a friend of Saturn, and a crony of Aldebaran's, the F. R. A. S. is a strange mixture of the man of science and the old astrologer.

The *Geological Society* of London, Somerset House, was instituted in 1807, and incorporated in 1826. Its object is the investigation of the mineral structure of the earth; and the papers read before it are pub-

lished in its 'Quarterly Journal' and 'Transactions.'

The *Geological Society* has had as many difficulties to encounter, if not more, than any of its fellows. There was a time when the very carrying of the stone-cracking hammer was thought a sure sign of heresy. Now geology and its relations to Scripture are better understood; and the boldest thinker can assert that coal is a

mineral fossil fuel that has taken some [thousands and thousands of years preparing for our use without fear of being burned in Smithfield. Science no longer blinds itself over books, or by lamp-light, as in the monkish days, but now climbs mountains, squeezes itself into crevasses, gets in the fresh, free air and broad sunlight, and interrogates Nature in her very citadels. The



F. R. A. S.

result is that Nature, who requires to be sought, and will not always come to the loudest calls, yields daily up her secrets. Science now tramps round Cornwall, and goes down mines, and scrambles up alps, and soars aloft in balloons, and uses its own eyes to show us that the whole work-a-day world has a vested interest in its discoveries.

The *Royal Geographical Society* of London, Whitehall Place, was in-

stituted in 1830; and the African and Palestine Associations were soon afterwards incorporated with it. Its objects are to publish geographical facts and discoveries in a cheap and convenient form; to collect a geographical library; to furnish useful instructions to those about to travel; to correspond with other geographical societies; and to reward with a medal those who contribute most to the progress of geo-

graphical science. The number of Fellows is unlimited. Meetings are held at least twice a month from November to June, and the annual meeting in May, on which occasion the royal awards are made to those who have most forwarded the objects of the society; and the President details the progress of geographical knowledge during the past year.

The *Royal Geographical Society* is

one of our most useful societies, and will one day be even more useful still, or we are no true prophets. Its province now is to collect and publish geographical facts and discoveries, and to enlarge the bounds of our knowledge of the earth's surface: we trust the time will come when it will keep a digest of the researches of all European travellers, and incite and encourage all



F. G. S.

voyagers whose object it is to extend commerce or bring home to us new products from other countries—fresh medicines, fresh fibres, and fresh plants. In this desultory age, when it is no longer possible for men to be Aristotles or Plinys, and master every branch of human learning, such societies as the Geographical have great opportunities of focusing and encyclopædizing the scat-

tered sciences, and doing by co-operation what no one brain or hand could dare even to attempt.

The *Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce*, John Street, Adelphi. When Dr. Madden, in Ireland, in 1740 left 1000*l.* a year to be distributed in premiums among those who should be most successful in the various branches of art and science, a desire of forwarding the

same objects arose in England, and resulted, about the middle of the last century, in the establishment of the Society of Arts, which was not, however, incorporated until 1847. Its object was to distribute prizes for the various improvements which might be made in arts and manufactures; and the amounts bestowed on individuals varied from 1*l.* to 14*l.* From the very first it met

with the warmest encouragement; and in 1765 the Common Council of London voted it a grant of 50*l.* But in the lapse of years its prosperity diminished, and in 1846 it scarcely contained 300 members. It again flourished when his late Royal Highness Prince Albert was induced to become its President; and it has continued to progress since that period. In closing its hundredth



F. E. S. A.

session in 1854, a report was presented, which, among other matters, suggested a law of limited liability in partnerships, and a memorial was prepared on the subject of the paper duty—both which important matters have been since satisfactorily disposed of; and means were taken for rendering more effective the general union of institutions which had been established in 1852.

The duties of the society soon became so multifarious, that it was found necessary to classify and arrange them in departments, over each of which a committee was appointed to preside. The subject of exhibitions of British manufactures having engaged its attention, it organized in 1847 the first of the kind which was held in these islands; and was not only attended with the

greatest advantages in connection with its immediate purpose, but by the satisfaction it gave led to the increased popularity, and therefore usefulness of the society itself. Among the exhibitions it originated was that of 'ancient and mediæval art,' in 1850, at which were collected together a very large number of interesting and valuable objects.

It was intended that there should be an ordinary exhibition each year, and every fifth year a national exhibition of a more comprehensive kind. When the society asked the Government to grant it a building suited to the purpose, it met with every encouragement; and its royal President ultimately devised the plan of the first Great International Exhibition, which was so successfully

carried out in 1851, and has served so admirably as a model for the second.

We owe a great debt to the *Society of Arts* in originating our two great International Exhibitions, and in fostering so zealously the art spirit among us. The Society has still its work before it in spreading a taste for pure art among the poorer classes. We want to see the everyday jug and plate of more sensible and beautiful shapes. At present they are of moulds that the very South Sea Islander surpasses. Let us remember that the poorest Greek had his water-jug of a matchless form, and that thousands of years ago the very baskets and vases of Athens were of beautiful types.

IN THE STREETS.

A London Reberie.

ONE day lately I had to meet my wife at the terminus of the Brighton Railway. She failed to come by the appointed train, but sent instead a telegram, begging me to wait for her arrival by the next. Having thus an hour or more at my disposal, I strolled to the foot of London Bridge and amused myself by watching the crowd. Here the great panorama of London life unrolled itself unceasingly for my entertainment, till at last, growing giddy with gazing at the restless puppets who disported themselves before me, I fell into a strange reverie. All these, I thought, are my servants; these toiling thousands are working for me. That waggon-load of mild breakfast bacon, this of cheese, that cartload of cigars, and that other one of tea—all are being distributed for my benefit over the vast city. An ample store of a hundred necessities and luxuries is being so divided that I may anywhere procure a supply of any one of them for the solitary shilling which I have to spend. Soon, however, I lost the momentary dignity which I gained by this reflection in a sense of loneliness. I had stood

here for half an hour, looking, during every minute, into scores of faces without having recognized any one. I felt as if stranded on the shore of a fierce stream of life with which I had nothing to do. And yet, who knows whether I was not interested nearly or remotely in many of the plans which the passers-by were so industriously weaving? That man may, for what I know, be considering whether he shall resign the lucrative place to which I shall succeed. One of these purky, self-satisfied-looking persons may be the cloth-merchant, about, by dunning my tailor, to have the screw put upon me for payment of that little bill which ought to have been settled at Christmas. From thinking of the multitude of ties by which, unknown to themselves, the strangers were bound together, I passed to the consideration of the odd acquaintances, and friendships, and even enmities which grow up in the streets of London, and which never extend beyond them. There are men, for instance, whom I hate because they scowl at me, or grin at me, or sneer at me when I pass them. There are men whom I like,

because, though I never see them out of the streets, they greet me when I encounter them there with a smile, or a nod, or a look of pleased recognition. No doubt I inspire similar feelings in the minds of numerous unsuspected observers of my street life. Then there are the odd occurrences of the streets, for which no explanation can be given. Why, for instance, should I always meet a certain old gentleman, with blue spectacles and a cigar a foot long, in Great Coram Street? Why should a late distinguished political economist have passed me on his road to the Athenæum always precisely opposite the third poplar tree from the entrance to St. James's Park? Why, of the two hundred and odd times at which I have crossed the path of Mr. Paul Bedford should he invariably have been opposite Northumberland House? Why should that very respectable German Jew, of whom I once bought a parcel of Hamburg pigs' bristles, always, when I pass Pentonville Prison, be coming round the corner of the wall with his hand to his hat, ready to bow to me? And why, above all, should I have been persecuted by the Cormorant? This last person lived near me, it is true, but surely that fact affords no explanation of his proceedings. He began by setting up a pair of preposterous models over his gate-posts which appeared to be effigies of the bird after which I named him. This was irritating, because I had to pass them every day on my road to the office, and the things were ugly. Then, after a time, he took to keeping a hackney cab (painted bright blue and with the royal arms emblazoned on each side) waiting at his door and appeared on his top step every morning just as I passed. Then, when I avoided the street, at the expense of an additional walk of a quarter of a mile, he used to meet the same omnibus and ride up to town by the side of me. I tried to avoid him by changing my conveyance, and went up to my work by the train, but he soon found me out and came into the same carriage morning after morning. All

this was bad enough, but he hunted me through my holidays as well. I met him at Dorking, I met him at Kew, I met him at Brighton, at Hastings, at Worthing, and at Cheltenham. I only just escaped going to the Isle of Wight with him, for I found him, carpet bag in hand, coming into the Waterloo Station as I was about to take my ticket. On this occasion, however, I was able to escape, and fleeing to London Bridge, went to Dover instead. Then, too, he presumed on this acquaintance and spoke to me. I was at that time very fond of the game of chess, and used to carry a small pocket chess-board with me on which to study problems as I went up to the City. Noticing this, he persisted in talking to me about chess, with which he professed to be acquainted. I could not, of course, be rude to him, so he began to treat me as if I was a personal friend, and stopped me to wish me good day whenever I was unfortunate enough to cross him. Then, before long, he appeared at my chess club, and I found to my dismay that he had just been elected a member, and that I had missed the chance of blackballing him through not knowing that the "Simson" for whom I had voted was the Cormorant in disguise. After this he got absolutely affectionate, and pressed me to come to his house and play with him. I steadily declined to do this, though I had sometimes to tax my invention for excuses.

Indeed, the pertinacious attempts of this chance acquaintance to force himself upon me, commenced about the time when another chance meeting had given me full occupation. For it was just then that I went down to Cheltenham in the same carriage with the most charming lady I had ever seen. Surely in the whole world there were not elsewhere such blue eyes, or such flaxen ringlets, or such neatly-turned ankles, or such a heavenly smile. She was perfection; she even played at chess. This last merit I discovered by accident. I had, as usual, produced my pocket board, and was busily engaged in the at-

tempt to solve one of Kling's latest puzzles, when the chaperone of my charmer asked to look at the board. I, of course, handed it to her, and informed her where its fellow might be purchased, and thus succeeded in entering into conversation with both of them. Before long, I was actually playing a game with the younger lady. I lost: how could I help losing when she added to the effect of each move by so sparkling a glance of her beautiful eyes. In a second and third game, I had the same fate. She played well certainly; not that she would have been able to beat me, one of the best players of the Tamarline Chess Club—if I had been able to fix my attention on the game. But what could I do? It was so pleasant to see her hand hovering over the board as she prepared to move, and to look up into her face while I waited for her, that I was quite unable to think of my own play. She had conquered me in more ways than one. From that time I thought of nothing but the lovely chess-player. I made numerous journeys down to Cheltenham, passing most of my Sundays there, and going the round of its churches in hopes of finding her at one of them. I haunted the platforms of the Great Western Railway for the chance of seeing her arrival or departure by one of the trains, to such an extent that, as I afterwards found, the porters and police kept a regular watch on me under the impression that I was a thief preying on the passengers' luggage. Once, only once, I saw her again. The train was just starting, and I had not seen her get in; but all at once she appeared at a window waving her hand to some one. Till she was out of sight I could not remove my eyes from her; but when she had disappeared I felt a jealous desire to know who had been blessed with her recognition. There was no likely person about the platform—the person, whoever he was, had gone. Cursing myself for not hav-

ing looked earlier, I walked out of the station, and there, driving off, was the Cormorant (I'll swear it was he) in the detestable blue cab. I slunk back, however, and he fortunately did not see me.

Some weeks afterwards, when I had begun to despair of ever seeing her again, I met the Cormorant at the club, and in answer to his renewed invitation to go to his house and play with him, I actually said I would. I was disgusted with myself afterwards; but at the moment I was thinking of that delightful journey to Cheltenham, and scarcely knew what I answered. However, being now in for it, I had no choice but to keep my appointment; but I determined to give the man such a beating as would make him very unlikely to ask me again; for I was quite satisfied that he could not play, though I had never had a game with him. It was impossible, indeed, that a man with such a forehead and such eyes as his could make a stand against me.

I went. We had commenced a game, and I had already, in eight or ten moves, obtained a winning advantage, when the door opened and two ladies entered. 'Let me introduce you,' said the Cormorant, 'to my wife and my daughter. Minnie,' he went on, addressing the latter, 'you will get a lesson if you look on; Mr. — is the best player in the Tamarline.' Could I believe my eyes? Here in the house which I had so resolutely avoided was the owner of the blue eyes and the fair ringlets who had carried off my heart in that famous ride on the Great Western, and for whom I had sought so long! How I played after that I know not—badly I fear. Suffice it to say, that I went to the house very often afterwards; that the Cormorant turned out a jolly good fellow, with a capital bin of old port; and that his daughter is the identical lady for whom, as her husband, I have been waiting all this time in the streets.

HELD ASUNDER.

A TALK IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEMPITERN HALL.

IT was the night of the Sempitern Ball, the crowning glory of the academical saturnalia. Half a dozen men, who had dined together at the 'Mitre,' were taking their dolce in my rooms in Sempitern. A veritable 'Tabaks-Parlement,' wherein languidly, each of us smoked and drank claret-cup, and drank and smoked again, in a lazy silence no one seemed to care to break. A calm sultry night had followed the blazing June day. Through the open windows, across the sacred grass-plots and stiff parterres of the old college gardens, stole its warm breath, balmy as the beloved one's, stirring ever so gently the soft blue haze of cigar-smoke that overhung the heads of the sitters. It was long since we had met all together, perhaps not since the eldest of us quitted our brotherhood at Eton. There he sits, yonder, in my own especial lounging-chair, the red glow of his regalia marking his whereabouts in the spacious oak-panelled room, his feet resting on Bran's submissive back, as the old dog lies panting on the deer-skin patiently. None but his quondam master (whose absence the faithful brute never quite forgot, do what I would to win his affections), none but Durham Vandeleur dare use Bran thus. Van looks, could you see his face, one who, for his caprice as for his settled purpose, would dare quietly and unhesitatingly any and everything. My godfather at Eton, a leader among us there, as he was at Oxford afterwards; the idolized chief of an irregular corps of Sikh cavalry (raised, indeed, and kept together solely by his own fame and the wild stirring work he cut out for them), invaluable during the Indian mutiny, and never remembered when the dark days were

past; heir to an uncle's seigneurie, now, in Midlandshire, and holding a high place in the Libro d'Oro of mothers and chaperones in quest of the 'right man' to bestow a darling's unplaced, and, alas! too often undowered affections upon. So far they have, with him, been unsuccessful. Fast and loose, most of you learn in time, meedames, is a game two can play at, and Vandeleur has not forgotten the time when he was a cadet and a 'detritmental.' Stretched yonder on the sofa, indolently and gracefully as a woman, pulling scientifically at the tube of his new-kindled hookah, lies Bertie Egerton, bronzed, too with the tropical sun, beneath which the 'Beau Sabreur,' as they used to call him, has fairly won his spurs. Beside him sits Lee-Phillips of the B. C. S., at home on furlough now, and making up for time lost in his far-away station, in the killing pace he seems to stand so well, of his life in London, Paris, and the Bads; Burton of the Oxford Circuit, and the grave law-calf-lined chambers in King's Bench Walk; Cressingham, of the Q. B.'s, with his faint sad smile and that 'far-away' look in his eyes, those who best know him have seen there since a day, years ago, when Maud Wynne (she is Maud Brandon now, you know, and I fancy that hard, stern plutocrat, her husband, sometimes regrets his bargain) and he parted in the crowded streets as she sat alone in the carriage for ten precious minutes, while mamma was chaffering over point d'Angleterre in Madlle. Honorine's back room, and I who speak to you, are the others.

Some one broke the silence—Lee-Phillips.

'Capital cigars, Monti! Carlin favours you. He never gave Pol-

wheel—you remember the bloated Croesus?—these regalias, though I know he paid anything!"

"Polwheal?" said Cressingham.

"Man with the tin-mine, wasn't he?"

"And a moderate income of some 50,000*l.* per annum! That's the man! You must remember him last season. There was a dead set made upon him by the Ferrers people, as soon as this story about the mine got wind, and Laura Ferrers devilish near hooked him. Unfortunately he overheard her, abusing him to Charlie Wynne in the conservatory while he was waiting for her in the drawing-room. She swears he must have hidden behind the portière to listen to what they were saying."

"Likely enough," struck in Egerton. "He's a frightful cad, I believe. What's become of him?"

"Well, it seems he was hit rather hard last autumn by the best entry of the season—the Lascelles, you remember. He followed her down to Broughton, the Cravens' place, and actually proposed to her! She has nothing, you know, and I suppose he thought she'd snap at him immediately. He was sold though. She refused him dead. The end of it was, he went abroad."

"I know," said Vandeleur. "I was there myself at the time it happened, and thought he was treated as he deserved. The fellow's a brute."

"Killed his first wife, didn't he?" said Egerton.

"There's some horrible story of *feue* Madame Polwheal, I know, going about still. They say he's a fiend when he's crossed, and he's sulky enough habitually."

"The Lascelles wouldn't stand bullying though," said Cressingham. "There'd have been something unpleasant if he had tried that. It was well she refused him. Luckily she hasn't a fond mother to look after her interests."

"She'll do that for herself," said Lee-Phillips, who rather hated the Lascelles for a sharp and merited punishment she had given him when he once tried to patronize her, *more suo*. "She'll do better than marry Polwheal, you'll see."

"How do you mean?" asked Vandeleur, somewhat quickly.

"By Jove *you* ought to know, Durham, of all men! If she wins, you lose, that's all."

"Being interpreted, all this means——?"

"Simply that report (truly this time, for a wonder) gives her the credit of no less a conquest than her guardian, old Lessingholme."

"My uncle? Not likely. He hates the notion too much. I don't think he'd make a fool of himself at his time of life, either."

"You forget though, that, with all respect for Sir Gervase, he is precisely at the age when men *do* make, or are most easily made to make, fools of themselves (the expression is yours, remember, not mine). What then is more natural (even if I weren't speaking from sure grounds) than that he should be as little proof against the witcheries of his ward as you——?"

"I?" said Van, haughtily.

"Or myself, or any of us," went on Phillips. "And this being so, isn't it probable—I don't say they have, mind—but isn't it likely that such considerations as a title, a rent-roll as long as Polwheal's, and (il faut lâcher le mot) an early widowhood, should have their due weight with the ward aforesaid, a portionless beauty with her own way to make? Upon my soul, if it it weren't common talk already, I should say it was more than likely."

And thereon followed a discussion. Van took no part in it, but I heard him mutter, as he flung himself back in his chair, "She, too, like the others!"

"It will be devilish annoying for Van, if it's true," observed Burton. "The Holme property is all entailed, and if Sir Gervase were to marry, and the usual results followed, you'd be cut out, Van. She must be a clever girl, this Miss Lascelles."

Van's lip curled bitterly. "Clever, doubtless. If the story is true—even if there are fair grounds for supposing so—she must be the veriest intrigante that——But she might have had Polwheal."

"Yes," said Phillips, "and had her throat cut too, in one of his jealous

sits. No, no! she's done better, as I said just now. However, they are to be at the ball here to-night. Lady Marabout, her chaperone, wrote to me for tickets. And I'll bet you anything you please that Sir Gervase is there too, playing the gay cavalier, as becomes a relic of the regency. Go and judge for yourself, Van. It's time to dress now. Allons, messieurs!

True or not, Lee-Phillips's words had wounded Vandeleur, though none there guessed it, like a poisoned blade. He had been, as he said, at Broughton, the Cravens' country place, the previous autumn, and there, for the first time, he had met Violet Lascelles. There, too, he had watched (like an indifferent spectator, as he thought,) the advance and repulse of the Croesus, Polwheal; but when the game was over he knew by the strange sense of relief he felt that he had been more deeply interested in its issue than he imagined. But he was a man not lightly moved and very hardly won. The curse of such a life as his had been—the habit of disbelief—was on him; yet, little by little, that fair face, so pure and proud, began to haunt him strangely. Day by day he felt himself drawn nearer and nearer to one who in all points satisfied his fastidious taste as no woman had ever done before. Slowly she conquered, but surely. Those were golden days for both, but they came to an end, as days of heaviness and sorrow do. They parted. Fettered as he was then by the thousand bonds that hamper a cadet-de-famille, he had never told her what was in his heart—the passionate love growing up there for her. Perhaps he had no need to tell her. She could trust him. 'Trust me not at all or all in all,' he had said to her once, and she remembered the words and the tone when he was gone, and never doubted.

The news of his freedom reached him abroad. His dream might be realized then, perhaps. In a week he was in England—to find the Violet Lascelles of the days at Broughton, the queen of every London ball-room, flattered, envied, and hated as

such suzerains are. 'She has not forgotten,' he thought. They told him in Park Lane that the Lascelles and Sir Gervase were away, staying, indeed, at the Lodge for the Sempitern ball. And so it came to pass that Durham Vandeleur found his way among us again, to my rooms in Sempitern, that had once been his. What he heard there you know; how Lee-Phillips's words did their work you will see.

The soft string-prelude to the 'Fairy Visions' (we didn't condemn London belles to the punishment of waltzing in pain and grief to the beer-begotten discord of the 'County Crushers' band) had just commenced when Van and I entered the ball-room at the Shire Hall. There was the usual hurrying in all directions of deluded mankind in search of strayed or shirking partners, and the crowd ebbed back slowly from the middle of the room towards the side-seats as the circle began to form. A half-suppressed exclamation from Van, and a triumphant grin from Lee-Phillips, who passed us just then with his favourite valseuse upon his arm, stopping long enough, however, to whisper, 'I was right you see, Van, after all. There's the Lascelles yonder by the window, and there's no mistaking Sir Gervase; he's a head taller than any man in the room. Qu'en pensez-tu maintenant?' ere he moved on to swing pretty Lucie Arkwright lightly and swiftly round the crowded circle. I wondered what made Van look so pale and stern. He would not have shown vexation, I knew, at the probability of losing the 'Holme.' Was the glamour of Violet Lascelles' loveliness on him too? Hardly, I thought, not knowing then that the passionate *last* love of a man, strong as death, imperious as fate, had vanquished him; that he loved, as he had never loved others, the woman whom until that day he had believed unlike the rest. She was there before him now, as he stood in the crowd pressing back every instant from the widening circle. The slender gloved hand rested on Sir Gervase's arm, and fondly and gallantly the old man's stately head was bent

down to listen to what she was saying; as the proud, delicate face—all the Violet of her name in the pure depths of the large eyes—bronzed gold gleaming in the woven splendour of her hair—was lifted lovingly and witchingly to his. Vandeleur's look was set now and inscrutable. He watched her as she passed. What were they saying? What was she saying? 'For my sake!' and then the answer, heard perhaps, but by his own sharpened ears and hers—'For your sake, darling, anything!' Look and tone more than the words, convinced him, and he felt that Lee-Phillips had spoken truth, or what might prove to be the truth ere long, that, be that as it might, his dream had ended in a bitter wakening!

Sir Gervase saw no difference in his nephew's manner when he welcomed him home again, later. The Lascelles, who had refused half a dozen men for the last galop, and whose white glove rested still on Sir Gervase's arm, when Van came up to them—the Lascelles did. She saw, before they had exchanged ten words, that a shadow—something to her vague, untangible, but still something, had arisen between herself and him—that he, at least, had forgotten the time at Broughton. What was it? What did his altered manner—the same, indeed, to other eyes—changed only for her; what did those calm, courteous, chilling words mean from him to her? The blow was sharp and unexpected, but she bore it well; a little pale, but that might be the heat—ever so alight a trembling of the lip and hand—the hand he would not see she offered him—and then all was calm and tranquil as before. Her woman's pride rose, angry and scornful. What had she done to merit this? And then something stronger than her pride beat it down. Was she not mistaken? Could he, for whose coming those bright eyes had watched so keenly, for whom the valse he used to like had been left blank upon her card; he who had once sought her and whose calm, stern face was wont to brighten only when she spoke, could he have forgotten all so soon?

'Don't you remember "Il Bacio," Major Vandeleur?' she said; 'it is the next valse, and I have kept it for you, though you hardly deserve it for coming so late!' The little hand holding out her ball-card to him: the soft, questioning look in her violet eyes, the tone of the half-pleading voice, might have vanquished most of us. Vandeleur smiled coldly. 'Pardon me, I have an engagement already. Besides, I must not take you from Sir Gervase now!' So he left her, and her dream too so vaguely sweet, so unconsciously cherished, ended as he turned away. He *had* forgotten then! How could she remember? knowing nothing, unable to guess why his should be the hand to strike her thus, her outraged pride forbade her to recall the past in accusation; it must be for her as though it had never been. She danced 'Il Bacio' with the first man who asked her, and 'who, she remembered, ran her against everybody in his frantic endeavours to show himself worthy of the most perfect valseuse in the three kingdoms. They came to a halt just as Vandeleur and Louise Bréloques swept by; her languishing eyes half closed, her head nearly on his shoulder, and her fair hair about her own as usual. The Bréloques thought the 'Bavadière' style rather suited to her and had adopted it of late. Van had made her throw over mamma's protégé in his own favour, and the Bréloques, notwithstanding the maternal frowns and telegraphy, had been but too pleased to do so. She had always cherished a hopeless little tendresse for Vandeleur, not strong enough, 'you know, to destroy her appetite or her sleep, or prevent her from taking such goods as the gods (and mamma, their importunate petitioner), might provide, in the shape of Polwheal or any other eligible; but it had never entered her shapely little head that he might or would ever care for her. But that night, after that last galop, when he had put her cloak about her, and she had gone down the hall steps on his arm, she began to think it might be on the cards, perhaps, after all.

I fear though, mademoiselle, it is not of you Vandeleur is thinking, as he stands on the steps watching you drive away, but of another face—the same which, do what he will, rises before him, proudly reproachful, as he smokes pipe after pipe in the cool morning air, before he tries to sleep—her face who, alone at last with no eye by to watch her tears, has torn off the stifling mask she has bravely worn till now, and on her pillow is weeping long and bitterly.

CHAPTER II.

LEE-PHILLIPS'S STORY.

Held asunder now—meeting of course in the whirl of the London season, but as strangers with a barrier between them neither could break down—Vandeleur and Violet Lascelles had spoken never a word to each other since that night of the Sempitern Ball. Vainly had she striven sometimes to find a reason for his conduct that night; striven till she hated herself for her weakness, and hardened her heart the more against inner voices that spoke for him—against the dangerous enervating memories of the happy past. She could meet him without a sign of weakness, she gained every day a greater power of endurance and self-command; but there were times when the firm hand relaxed, the proud will gave way, and long pent-up tears dimmed the lustrous eyes, and fierce choking sobs shook that frail form, that none saw or heard. Did he suffer too? A line or two grown deeper on his face—a sterner look there, less often softened by his old winning smile—a touch of bitterness now in his satire or his irony, were all the visible outward signs of the work going on within. He saw her often now, neither seeking nor avoiding places where she was sure to be. Wherever she went, with scarcely an exception, Sir Ger-vase followed or accompanied his ward. Always the same glad, loving smile for him; always her hand nestling under his arm, till he settled down to his whist or his fauteuil in the quiet corner

where he could watch his darling. Lee-Phillips's story was common property now, everybody had heard it, except indeed those immediately concerned. The Lascelles' rivals who were her friends confided it to people skilfully by innuendo, those who were her enemies proclaimed it from the housetops.

His friends condoled with Vandeleur and abused her, till he grew restive and stopped that summarily. One night at a supper at the Foljambe's villa, partly because he had drunk more champagne cup, than was good for him, partly because he saw it irritated Van, whom he disliked, Fairfax, one of the danseuse's guests, enlarged on the subject of 'the swindle,' as he called it, to a horribly irritating extent, and refused to be interrupted. Van took him up short at last. 'You seem to forget you're talking of people whom you don't know, and I don't choose the actions of any relative of mine should be canvassed in my presence by outsiders. If Miss Lascelles has offended you, she is quite able to take care of herself if you like to try a fall with her; but you had better leave back-biting and scandal-mongering to her own sex—they can do it better than you, and more safely. *Suum cuique*, you know. Will you give me some mayonnaise, Monti?' And Van resumed his supper tranquilly. The other wisely held his tongue. He saw he had gone far enough; but he liked neither Vandeleur nor the Lascelles a whit the better for the lesson. He couldn't understand a man taking up the glove for a woman who would, as he himself observed, jockey him out of one of the finest estates in England. Many other people besides Vane Fairfax couldn't either. Van had a way of coming down on you when you hit at her that sometimes puzzled you, bitterly as he would speak of her himself.

The Foljambe went nearer the truth than most of us. 'Vous croyez qu'il la déteste—la petite? Je vous dis moi, qu'il l'aime comme un démon! Ah je m'y connais—

J'en mettrais ma main au feu!' she said to Fairfax when Vandeleur had gone. And the little keensighted woman was right enough.

The season was drawing to a close. It was the middle of July. 'I'm getting tired of this, Monti,' said Durham to me one day after luncheon. 'I shall send round the yacht to Marseilles, take a run through the Bads while she's fitting out, and winter abroad, I think. What are you going to do to-day? Drive down to Richmond with me. Cressingham asked me to try those new greys of his, and we'll have a quiet dinner in the cool—it's better than broiling here.' So in due time the greys came round and we started. 'Not bad performers, eh, "Monti"?' said Van, when we were fairly on the road. 'Passed everything yet hard-held.' 'There's something behind putting on steam to pass us,' said I, as the rapid roll of wheels and the clatter of hoofs made me look round. 'They're coming along at a gallop. I believe it's a bolt!' Van turned his head over his shoulder—'By Jove! it is a bolt, or that fellow on the box is drunk. They'll be into us if we don't take care. He can't hold 'em, and here's the hill! There must be a smash directly!' The greys fought and plunged, startled by the noise behind us, as Van drew them off the road and the grooms ran to their heads. 'Some one inside!' he said, 'a woman! Two, by Jove! Fortunately they haven't tried to jump out. I say, Monti, we must try and stop these devils somehow. If they're not mad with fright we may manage it perhaps—that pace must have told!' Swaying fearfully from side to side, the carriage—a low open one—came swiftly bearing down on us as we stood right in its way. It looked a hopeless business enough, and foolhardy withal; but we were bound to do what we could, it seemed. They were close upon us. Another moment, and the mad gallop of the runaways would carry them past or over us. Luckily, when they caught sight of us, they swerved. A violent lurch brought the [near wheel against a road-post. The axle broke, but the sudden jerk

flung one brute on his knees, and the pair (already fairly blown by their spin), nothing loth, came to a standstill. With a hearty anathema on the now sobered occupant of the box, (the horror-stricken footman had flung himself off into a hedge), Vandeleur went round to the side of the carriage to assure its occupants of their safety. 'I wonder who they are, to trust themselves to the tender mercies of these half-broke brutes and that drunken Jehu?' he muttered. 'Good heavens! Lady Marabout! Miss Lascelles!' None other. The fiery chestnuts, as everybody had prophesied, had bolted at last, and very nearly brought about a catastrophe. As it was, it had been miraculously prevented. After one mad effort to fling herself out, checked only by the Lascelles' coolness and the sheer force with which she held her terrified chaperone down in her seat, poor Lady Marabout had done the best thing possible under the circumstances, and had quietly fainted away. The Lascelles wasn't the stamp of woman to faint while the peril was imminent or inevitable. Yet, plucky as she was, she wasn't proof against the reaction, when the danger was past and gone. She saw, without knowing how, that they were saved, and, pale as her unconscious chaperone now, and trembling convulsively, she sunk back beside her. His voice roused her. Slowly the heavy lids unclosed, and it was his face she saw leaning over hers, with the look of a never-forgotten time upon it once more. Half unconsciously, her thought shaped itself into words. 'You!' she said, 'then I am safe!' 'Saved, thank God!' he said; and for a moment more neither spoke. Poor Lady Marabout gave signs of recovery at length—thanks to the fearfully powerful salts I had discovered; and with a ponderous sigh, awoke gradually to the pleasing conviction that no one was hurt and nothing broken, except the carriage-axle and the chestnut's knees. A groom had been despatched to the pretty little cottage ornée she rented as an occasional retreat during the season, (and

whither, indeed, she and her charge were bound that afternoon,) for the pony-chaise she drove about the park in; and presently returning, my lady, who had sufficiently recovered by this time from her fright to bore Van and myself with the most exuberant and exhaustless encomiums on our noble conduct, &c., was placed therein—the Lascelles guiding the pony, Cressingham's greys had fidgeted and waxed so impatient at the delay that the phaeton had gone on, and Van and I were made prisoners and forced to join the cortège. The Marabout was in the middle of a long harangue à mon intention, and, chafe as he might, there was nothing in courtesy for Van to do but fall in on the other side, on the Lascelles whip-hand.

By her side again; Lady Marabout's flow of eloquence never ceasing; the groom discreetly in the rear, and yet we were almost in sight of the cottage ere either had spoken a word. Perhaps they were thinking (one was at least) of the time when he had walked beside her pony through the autumn woods at Broughton, and silence then had had a divine eloquence of its own. All that was past and gone now. She must forget, as he had done, and never, perhaps, know why they were held asunder. But, at least, he had saved her—saved her, she shuddered still to think from what. Would he not let her thank him? He was speaking at last, and she found herself answering him on a dozen indifferent matters. In a few brief moments he would be gone. She put out her hand to him, her eyes looking half-proudly, half-timidly into his (and few men had ever seen *that* look in the Lascelles' eyes before!) 'I owe you my life, Major Vandeleur; will you not take my thanks?' He bent forward to gather up the reins she had let fall. 'I!' he said; 'you forget there were two of us, and that Hervey was before me. You owe me nothing, Miss Lascelles. Let me restore you your reins. Your pony wants curb, and you mustn't run the risk of another upset to-day.' She bent her head

haughtily in thanks. He had roused her in earnest, now; it was indeed something new for her to be treated thus. Her face was as cold and calm as his own when he took his leave, cutting short ruthlessly, but politely, a fresh harangue from the Marabout. Without another word they parted; this time sundered wider than before. In another week we were in Lindenbad.

CHAPTER III.

THE TURNING-POINT.

It was pleasant enough at Lindenbad. Both Van and I knew the place by heart; every path in the forest, every track on the green slopes of the hills, the lions and the lounges, the picnic-places and the promenades, the salons of the Cercle, and the faces of the habitués.

But for all that, Lindenbad has always been a favourite haunt of mine, between the end of the season and September. You meet pleasanter wickedness, eat better trout, drink better marcobrunner in that snug little paradise than in half the more over-run and over-'done' haunts of idleness or hypochondria. There is no 'board of green cloth,' it is true—no kursaal—but your taste for high play can always be gratified at the Cercle, where there is unlimited écarté and lansquenét to play at, and the best hands at both in Europe to play with. The Bad itself is a favourite with the fair *princesses de passage*, amongst others, on leave of absence from their prison-houses in St. Petersburg, who take their *saison des eaux* on their way to winter in Paris. You may see them performing the regulation walk, and emptying the prescribed number of tumblers of abominable water by day, and flirting outrageously, or playing ditto at night by way of compensation. And they find no lack of partners at either game. Some good-looking cousin or other, (a sub., perhaps, in the Imperial Guard, on leave,) who is sure to turn up by-and-by, or *faute de mieux*, some fair-haired Saxon lad on his first long vacation tour *en foit*

les frais. Altogether, you find no lack of pastime at the little Bad.

Once more then, Van and I occupied our old rooms, at the Aigle Noir, played *écarté* at the Cercle, or lounged away the time in the shady woods, or smoked and drank *marcobrunner* on the terrace, as in the days of old. Whatever might have been his thoughts, (and to judge by the look I sometimes surprised upon his face they could have been no pleasant ones,) he kept them to himself. Now and then, indeed, when the last drop had been poured from the flask long ago, and the stars were coming out, one by one, over our heads, as we sat in the twilight on the balcony of my room, watching the idlers on the river walk, or the last arrivals by the diligence, he would speak briefly but bitterly, of the sordid intrigue which was to dupe Sir Gervase into committing matrimony. 'She's won the stakes by this time, I suppose,' he would say; 'I wish her joy of them; but it's hard to see a man I've always liked—one of my own blood too—made the victim of a *guet-à-pens* like this. If he were younger, one might believe it all fair and honest enough, but this is the old story. To be sure she has played her cards well. That refusal of Polwheal, which deceived even me, was a master-stroke. She might have had the better move planned out even then, and it was done sufficiently well to make the chosen one believe firmly in Mademoiselle's disinterestedness. Bah! I'm sick of bartering like this! And she, too, of all others, to sell herself so shamelessly and openly; she, Vernon Lascelles' daughter—who would sooner have seen her dead than doing this. The proverb's a lie, Monte; "*Bon sang peut mentir*"—here's an instance!' Knowing that the mere loss of an inheritance he had ever looked upon as his own, would never make him speak bitter words like these, I began to think the Foljambe was right after all, and that it was the loss of her that bore so heavily upon him; that he did love her with the love that must have all or nothing; that would make him sooner love her dead

than learn to hate her living, and another's.

The time passed away, and already we began to think of turning our backs on Lindenbad—he to join the 'Sea Queen' at Marseilles, where she lay in readiness for his coming, and I to meet a host of pleasant people at home, make havoc of the coveys in the September stubble-fields by day, and talk to Cousin Gwen in the twilight on the terrace, afterwards.

'Come up to the Schloss and smoke a pipe, Monti,' said Van, after breakfast one morning, coming into my room where I was dressing hurriedly for a riding party. 'It's about the last time we shall see it, and it's infernally hot down in the valley, here.' 'Can't,' I said, taking up my hat; 'I'm engaged to ride to the Weisserbrunnen with the Kraftenberg and her party; I'm late as it is. That fellow in the courtyard with my nag has been waiting ten minutes already. We'll look you up there as we come back.' 'Don't. I'm too sulky to-day to stand the Kraftenberg's chaff. Take care she don't let you in for one of those cousins of hers. Those Vienna girls are uncommonly dangerous! Addio! I'm off!' I saw him stride away in the sunlight across the terrace, and strike into the shaded path that led to the old Schloss on the hill yonder. It was a favourite haunt of ours. In the cool grey twilight of its cloisters, or seated on the somewhat dangerous elevation of its ruined battlements, we had smoked and sketched and chatted many a summer's day away together—had made up parties to pic-nic there, and dance afterwards in the old Rittersaal, the only room in habitable condition, and heard its walls ring with profane laughter, and the popping of champagne corks. Van's practised stride soon brought him up the slope. Just as he reached the level where the Schloss stands, the jingle of bells, and the crack of a postilion's whip made him look round. 'No peace for the wicked it seems,' he muttered to himself; 'lionizers for the Schloss, of course. They'll be an hour, at least; I may as well stay here till they're gone.' He stretched himself on the short

dry turf, under the shadowing branches of a huge tree, and waited patiently. The noise of the horses' bells grew louder as they got into a trot again on the level: he turned his head carelessly to see who might be the occupants of a fearful and wonderful-looking calèche drawn by a pair of short-legged, long-tailed ponies, whereof one was mounted by a native postilion, swallowed up in enormous jack-boots. As he caught sight of the face of some one in the calèche, he started. 'She here! Pooh, it can't be; and yet I could have sworn I recognized her. Bah! am I always to fancy I see her—am I never to forget her?' You see, strive to banish the thought of her as he might, he had never succeeded yet. They would not be laid, those memories of the past; they haunted him unceasingly. He was thinking of her now—bitterly, wrongfully; and yet, could she have read his soul she would have pardoned even that for the sake of the great love wherewith he loved her still. An hour and more passed away, and he had not stirred. Clouds had gathered on the hills, and were moving down upon the valley; a big drop of rain splashed suddenly in his face. 'It's lucky I'm so near the Schloss,' he thought; 'the Saal is tolerably water-tight, and this won't last long.' It began sharp enough, though; ere he had reached the grass-grown courtyard it was falling in torrents. He shook the wet from his shooting-jacket and hat, and, vaulting over the framework of what had once been a window, found himself in the Bittersaal. Not however, as he expected, alone. Some one, like a vision in her white summer robes, a tall girl with bronze-golden hair, turned round with a startled look and a half-suppressed cry at his sudden appearance, and he stood face to face with Violet Lascelles. He *had* seen her then; she must have been one of the occupants of the calèche he had noticed mounting the hill before him. For a moment both were silent, each confounded at the other's presence there. Then the discipline of the world asserted itself. That brief moment had re-

stored her her self-possession, had sufficed to give his face the coldly courteous look it wore when they parted last. She had been sitting in the shadow of the archway (not a hundred yards from him, then, all the time), finishing a sketch for Lady Marabout, who was waiting for her at the forest-keeper's. She had been driven in for shelter by the sudden rain; Lady Marabout would be uneasy at her absence. 'Is it raining still, Major Vandeleur?'

'Harder than ever, unfortunately. You cannot possibly venture at present: but Lady Marabout of course concludes you have found shelter here.'

'On your domain,' she said, half-smiling. 'How you must wish it had been anywhere else! We are enemies, I know, and my trespass on your courtesy shall be short.'

'Enemies!' he said, slowly. 'Do you think so? Do you then think me so utterly selfish?'

'Selfish I do not believe you: unjust (pardon the free speech you have yourself prompted), perhaps: but my personal enemy, surely!'

She spoke lightly; but her words made the strong man turn pale.

'You do me wrong.'

'I?' she answered, and the proud slender form grew erect and confronted him. 'I do you no wrong. Do you not hate me? (since it were best, perhaps, to speak once for all)—have you not proved it by word and deed?—by words brought but lately to my knowledge—unjust, cruel words! by deed, when you thought me, I know not why, too much your foe to take my thanks that day at Richmond? You know it is so. I do not seek to know how I have earned this: you can hardly expect me to divine the reason.'

Was this real? or was she acting still, trying to deceive herself and him?

'Can you not guess? Have you forgotten the days when we first met?'

'You have no right to speak of them!' she cried, passionately.

'And as little wish: the time for recalling them is past. The future you have chosen should have de-

stroyed and blotted them out from your memory—if they ever held a place in it.

'The future I have chosen?'

'Is it not time to avow it plainly? It was a wise choice, they will tell you, envying your place and power,—a bargain in your favour altogether. You give yourself, it is true, but you take what (though, doubtless, with Sir Gervase it weighs lightly in the balance) most of your sex consider a fair equivalent.'

She started as though he had struck her. The violet eyes flashed, and the delicate form dilated as she answered him:

'And you!—you to say this to me! Are you so bitter a foe that you must needs believe—and help stamp current by believing—the miserable falsehoods your better reason should have laughed at? Am I, then—is any woman so base in your eyes that you think her capable of such voluntary degradation in her own sight as this? What have I ever done that you should judge me thus?'

He listened, pale and silent, his whole being hanging on her lips. Had he indeed judged her wrongly, as she said? She went on:

'I have heard, though only of late, what they have said of me and my dead father's dearest friend—he who, when most I needed one, has been almost as that father to me! Idle scandal, malicious falsehood like this, whispered by those who, knowing nothing, judged me by themselves, needed, I thought, no refutation on my part, even could I, for *his* sake, whom I love and honour as his child might do, have stooped to give one. I deemed, it seems wrongly, that I had no need to fear misconstruction from any one who did not wilfully misinterpret my conduct; that at least *you* would not credit lightly tales like these, and, blinded by (I will not wrong *you* by calling it self-interest)—by I know not what feeling against me, have proclaimed my father's daughter capable of sacrificing all delicacy and self-respect, and of repaying the generous care and affection of her chosen protector by the base, cold-hearted treachery

of an unscrupulous intriguante! You best know why you have done this. I have given you no cause. I owe you my life, Major Vandeleur: you have gone far to-day to make me regret the debt!'

She turned away from him, as she spoke, to leave him. He stood following her with his eyes. He never doubted her—perhaps in his heart of hearts he never had. All that he had seen and heard, and that his jealous and exacting love had made to tell (he cursed himself to think how heavily) against her, were as nothing against those few words of hers—against that tone and manner and regard. Never falsehood looked as she looked then. And was he to lose her now?—lose her, when he knew that she was, as he had once held her to be, noblest and best of all? How could he hope for forgiveness?—how expect that much would be forgiven him in that he he had loved much; had wronged her only because he had loved her deeply? Could he ask it even? Could he humble his pride to her, who might prove pitiless now as he had been?

Involuntarily, as it seemed to him, her name rose to his lips:

'Violet!'

She turned her head and stood still pale, but calm, to listen to him! (Forgive her, *mesdames*! you would have listened to nothing, I know. Perhaps she had rather more at stake than you might have thought prudent to venture on the game!) He moved a step towards her. No living man had ever heard from Durham Vandeleur's lips the words they spoke then:

'Violet! forgive me!'

She had conquered then, and their fate was in her hands. What would you have done, *mademoiselle*? *She* trusted him. She put her hand—the hand he had, blind fool that he was! rejected twice—out to him again. Ah! closely, firmly now, never to be let go again, his own closed upon it; and, strange to say, the *Lascelles* seemed quite satisfied with this proof of her victory and his repentance. Long before he had finished the passionate pleading, she, silent all the while, never lost

a word of, the cause had been given in his favour; the sin forgiven; the wrong sufficiently atoned for by the knowledge that he had loved her always. Foolish, was she not? I don't think she has had any reason to repent her folly, though. She and Van haven't yet fulfilled the expectations and hopes of certain prophets of evil, though they were married two years ago. Lady Marabout easily forgave Van (he had always been a favourite of hers) when, the rain ceasing, she came in

person to explore the Schloss in search of her missing charge,—for his forgetfulness of herself and her chaperone's anxiety. And that night, when she slumbered peacefully on the sofa after her coffee, the lovers stood together in the starlight on the balcony, 'Together now, darling, and for ever!' whispered his voice passionately in her ear, as he put his arm about her. 'Let me forget, as you have forgiven the sins of love against love, that once held us asunder!'



OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

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